The German Tribune

Hamburg, 11 December 1988
Twenty-seventh year - No. 1350 - By air

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF THE GERMAN PRESS

C 20725 C
ISSN 0016-8858
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Euro Summit shows limits to any leap forward

Hannoversche Allgemeine

There was no great leap forward at the Rhodes meeting of the heads of state and government of the 12 European Community member-states.

En route to the single internal market *they took time off for a half-way mark* reappraisal of the situation.

In the temperate Greek island climate they reviewed progress to date, took a closer look at their 1992 internal market deadline and otherwise contented themselves with non-committal declarations of intent.

After their successful marathon meetings in Brussels and Hanover they can hardly be begrudged having allowed themselves to be guided this time by the *genius loci* and to have concentrated on the art of non-committal conversation by which the Ancient Greeks set such store.

Even so, the European Community has no reason for resting on its laurels.

So far the Twelve have kept to the schedule and at half-way mark have passed roughly 50 per cent of the legislation needed for the single internal market.

Reciprocal recognition of university degrees, deregulation of capital movement and perceptible progress in deregulating public sector contracts and reaching agreement on European standards are undoubtedly a firm foundation for further moves toward integration.

Taken together with the reform of the common agricultural policy, the system of Community finances and structural policy, they *are even more promising*. The 1992 deadline has lent the Community unforeseen impetus.

Within a few years Eurosclerosis has been superseded by a Eurodynamism that has made the process of European integration irreversible.

The European internal market is exercising a growing external effect, and not just on the Efta countries, which feel increasingly geared to the European Community.

The *Community* is *seen more* and more clearly all over the world as an economic and political force to be reckoned with. The countries of Eastern Europe have sounded out the prospects of cooperation in Brussels.

The Americans and Japanese are gearing up, *with mixed feelings*, for tougher European competition — by setting up a free trade zone comprising the United States and Canada, for instance.

Their fears and expectations seem wildly exaggerated when viewed from the European vantage point. *European Community leaders reiterated at the* Rhodes summit that they have no intention of setting up a "Fortress Europe."

As for the larger European market without frontiers to which everyone refers and which all member-countries are said to favour, it so far resembles nothing so much as a castle in the air.

The highest hurdles en route to the promised internal market have yet to be cleared. They include fiscal harmonisation, monetary cooperation, welfare policy and the abolition of border controls.

The Rhodes summit showed yet again that Britain's Margaret Thatcher is determined to prevent her partners in Europe from venturing too great a leap forward.

At this fairly early stage in the debate the others were right not to embark on a fundamental dispute with Mrs Thatcher on the Community's political objectives, on a European central bank, the "social dimension" or the abolition of border controls.

There would have been far too great a risk of top-level political disputes blocking any and all specific steps forward.

Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, is well aware that this British bastion cannot be taken by storm.

So, like the Turks who besieged the bastion of the Knights of St John where the European summit was held, M. Delors has opted in favour of the tenacious *approach of trying to breach the Iron* Lady's defences by gradually submitting specific, realistic, individual proposals designed to lend the internal market its social dimension.

It would have been unwise to discuss the abolition of border controls at this stage. *In two or three years, when the internal market* is more cohesive and even more breaches have been made in the British bastion, the discussion will take a course entirely different from the shape it would have taken in Rhodes.

The summit's failure to seriously discuss *the proposed harmonisation of* indirect taxes was, in contrast, incomprehensible, especially as the Commission's proposals had been presented and were available for debate.

The Finance Ministers of the Twelve have already debated them in detail.

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Cross Rhodes. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (left) and Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the Summit.

New Soviet guidelines with the same old ideas

Frankfurter Allgemeine

The good news is that Soviet foreign policy is being redefined on a moderate and level-headed basis. The bad news *is that militarily the Soviet Union has not* gone in for reduction. So Soviet "new *thinking*" is no different from the old.

With unabated energy the Red Army continues to be plied with heavy weapons for its "Western war theatre" while the Soviet air force is equipped with modern *fighter bombers*.

The same is true of the medium-range missiles that are being scrapped in accordance with the INF Treaty; they are being replaced by long- and short-range systems.

The latest military balance issued by the International Institute for Strategic *Studies, London, leaves no doubt on all* these points, and the Soviet military are not even bothering to make any claims to the contrary.

The Soviet Union's surprise attack or *ground-gaining* operation capability has not been reduced in the least.

Soviet "new thinking" has not, other than by way of semi-official ideas, brought about any changes in Westpolitik with regard to Berlin and Germany.

This was last unmistakably apparent during *Chancellor Kohl's visit* to the Kremlin, and the aim of this emphasis was not just to please Herr Honecker and keep the GDR quiet.

There can no longer, since Mr Gorbachov's after-dinner speech in Moscow, be any question of opportunities having been missed on the German Question.

Since Mr Gorbachov borrowed the metaphor from Mr Brezhnev the "common house" of Europe has been given *neither a new and more pleasing ground* plan nor more comfortable furniture.

There can only be any substantial change once the Kremlin leaders are agreed on three points:

- that the process of integration in Western Europe is making headway;
- *that the US and Canadian military presence* in Europe remains indispensable;
- and that nuclear weapons continue to be needed to keep Europe's architecture stable.

1992 will mark not a conclusion to Western European integration but an *important stepping* stone on the road to a prosperity zone of industrial democracies in Europe.

The superiority of the social market economy and Western technology have already forced the Soviet leaders to realise that 70 years of revolution were in vain.

The peaceful *dynamism* of a united Western Europe can be sure to intensify its intellectual and material attraction for Eastern Central Europe.

Realists in the Kremlin can no longer aim to stem the tide of this trend or to prevent it. Their common objective must

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■ SECURITY

Spending dominates defence agenda

Nato Defence Ministers met in Brussels for a two-day autumn conference dealing mainly with sharing the burden of military spending.

The United States, with its heavy budget and foreign trade deficits, is keener than ever to see Western Europe make a more substantial contribution toward the cost of defending the Continent.

A report submitted to the conference assessed the contribution made by individual countries and outlined sectors in which improvements were felt to be possible.

Eurogroup Defence Ministers agreed in preparatory consultations to play a comprehensive and constructive role in strengthening Nato's defence capability.

But they strongly rejected the US accusation that their contribution toward joint defence was inadequate.

The 12 Defence Ministers of Eurogroup member-countries launched an information campaign in which they underscored their contribution within Nato.

They distributed a brochure entitled "Burden Sharing — The European View" in which figures were quoted to illustrate their claim that Europe and Turkey have shouldered most of the burden of their conventional defence.

The brochure heightened the impression that the North Atlantic pact is heading for a serious transatlantic clash on burden sharing.

It notes that in the European and Turkish sectors of Nato 95 per cent of divisions, 90 per cent of troops and artillery, 80 per cent of tanks and combat aircraft and 65 per cent of larger warships are locally supplied.

If a state of emergency were to arise the United States could mobilise 3.8 million men, whereas Europe could mobilise seven million.

Between 1970 and 1987 Europe is said to have increased its defence spending by 34 per cent on average and in real, i.e. inflation-adjusted terms.

America, in contrast, is said to have increased its defence spending by only 15 per cent over the same period — and to have reduced its troop strength in Europe, whereas Europe had increased its service manpower.

The brochure deals in detail with the extent to which the Federal Republic of Germany is affected by foreign troops and manoeuvres.

Nato is said to hold 85 larger and about 5,000 smaller-scale military exercise a year in Germany, not to mention 580,000 flight movements by military aircraft.

At talks that traditionally begin the meeting of the Defence Planning Committee, or twice-yearly session of Nato Defence Ministers, the Eurogroup extended the burden sharing issue to include trade ties between Europe and North America and the common arms market. Economic policymakers were reminded of the "international economic dimension" of the European Community's forthcoming single internal market.



Nato secretary-general Manfred Wörner (left) and Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Herr Wörner was playing an official visit to Bonn. See Perspective, page 5. (Photo: dpa)

What they meant was that the United States must, partly in view of common security interests, be guaranteed privileged access to the European internal market.

This having been said, the Eurogroup then took the United States to task, noting in its communiqué that the security of Europe continued to depend on North American commitment and on the continued presence of North American troops in Europe to guarantee the alliance strategy of deterrence and defence.

This reminder was felt by European Defence Ministers to be necessary in view of what state secretary Lothar Rühl of the Bonn Defence Ministry referred to as a caesura or hiatus the transition in the White House and the larger Democratic majority in Congress meant for America's European allies.

Nato partners were said by Bonn Defence Minister Rupert Scholz to have taken a "very positive" and "most appreciative" view of the German defence contribution.

He noted, after the initial session of the autumn conference, that US Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci had endorsed the Eurogroup's report.

Herr Scholz referred to the contribution the Federal Republic had made by increasing the length of conscription and continued to make in the form of "immaterial" provisions such as allowing 900,000 servicemen to be stationed in Germany.

He said a German proposal to set up a multinational airborne division in northern Germany had been taken up in Brussels.

It was envisaged as including German, British, Belgian and Dutch personnel. A working party had been entrusted with drawing up a concept.

Winfried Münster

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 2 December 1988)

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The most controversial items have been identified.

No-one who calls to mind the tax reform debate in the Federal Republic of Germany will fail to appreciate how difficult it is to reform tax systems. Each and every change has profound effects on budgets and national economies.

No-one will harbour illusions that the proposed tax harmonisation can be implemented in a matter of months, and time is short. In the final analysis the European Community now has only two years left if it is to reach agreement in time for its 1992 deadline.

Thomas Gack

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 5 December 1988)

New Soviet guidelines

Continued from page 1

be to keep under control, by means of coordinated management, an inevitable change in East-West relations that is sure to increase instability.

There can be no question of revising frontiers, but form and content must change. Austrian accession to the European Community is a case in point.

The roof that is shared in the common house of Europe is a metaphor that must not close our eyes to the fact that roofs of this kind are made of values, ideas and interests all of which link Western Europe and North America and separate them from the Soviet empire.

The "European house" figure of speech has nothing in its favour but geography and unclear sentiments.

In the cold war era the Soviet Union may have overlooked the fact that America's role in Europe was more than mere containment and a military guarantee; it overruled previous European conflicts and disputes, lent expression to economic interdependence and was a means of maintaining international political stability.

The change that now appears imminent seems likely to intensify this US role. It will no longer be enough for the Soviet Union to grudgingly accept an American presence it cannot, in any case, prevent.

It must be the precondition and structural architectural element of all planning.

The double zero solution in respect of land-based medium-range nuclear missiles is now to be followed, as the Soviet Union sees it, by the scrapping of all nuclear weapons with a range of less than 500km. That would amount to not only cancellation of Nato's "flexible response" strategy but, implicitly, to calling on the Americans to withdraw from Europe.

Mr Gorbachov would then be alone in possessing nuclear weapons in Europe — apart from the British and French nuclear deterrents, which as *ultima ratio* weapons serve a somewhat different purpose.

The United States will neither consider a return to the "massive retaliation" strategy of the 1950s nor leave its troops stationed in Europe without nuclear support.

As a result Nato would be finished and Europe might once more be the scene of a conventional war.

Theatre nuclear weapons must and will be reduced to a reasonable and adequate level, but the stabilising effect of nuclear weapons in and for Europe must, on the other hand, be retained.

Internal change in the Soviet Union is revolutionary and dramatic. If it goes off the rails it could pose a threat to the outside world.

This threat is accentuated by foreign policy change, especially in Eastern Central Europe, not yet having begun.

The West has an interest in not preventing the Gorbachov revolution from above. Whether it can help is another matter.

But the West's task cannot be to spare Soviet leaders the choice between guns and butter. Help must first and foremost come from within.

Michael Stürmer

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 1 December 1988)

New statistics reveal military strengths

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

In almost all defence categories, the Federal Republic of Germany has the largest land-based armed forces in Europe — apart from the Soviet Union — say the latest Nato figures.

The comparative statistics for Nato and the Warsaw Pact countries released in Nato capitals are the first coordinated data comparison Nato has issued since 1984.

As usual, the East Bloc is found to be much superior in weapons for launching an attack or an invasion.

Nato has drawn up the statistics to underline its view that the Warsaw Pact must make much bigger concessions than the West at the proposed conventional disarmament talks to strike a balance in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

The Nato report, which is said to be based on the latest Western figures and on estimates where the East is concerned, lists arms and manpower by country for the first time.

In main battle tanks, for instance, the Federal Republic heads the list in the West, with 4,330, followed by Turkey with 3,000, while in the East the Soviet Union, with 37,000 tanks, comes well ahead of Czechoslovakia, 3,800, Poland, 3,400, and East Germany, 3,000.

The Federal Republic leads the West in armoured infantry vehicles too, while its artillery firepower is second only to Turkey's. As for helicopters and combat aircraft, the Federal Republic is outnumbered in Western Europe by the United States.

Nato is worried by the Warsaw Pact's enormous superiority in tanks, artillery and engineering corps strength and by the threat it poses to the West.

The latest figures, which have been submitted to all 35 countries associated with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), is intended to prompt the East to be more "transparent" and release detailed figures on its arms and manpower in time for the forthcoming disarmament talks.

Nato secretary-general Manfred Wörner has appealed to Mr Gorbachov, the Soviet leader, to let actions follow his words and show earnest on the reduction in conventional armaments which he proposed.

Thomas Meyer

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 26 November 1988)

The German Tribune

Friedrich Reinecke Verlag GmbH, 3-4 Hartwicusstrasse, D-2000 Hamburg 76, Tel.: 22 85 1, Telex: 02-14733.

Editor-in-chief: Otto Heinz. Editor: Alexander Anthony. English language sub-editor: Simon Burnett. — Distribution manager: Georgine Picone.

Published weekly with the exception of the second week in January, the second week in April, the third week in September and the third week in November.

Advertising rates list No. 16
Annual subscription DM 45

Printed by CW Niemeyer-Druck, Hameln

Distributed in the USA by: MASS MAILINGS, Inc., 540 West 24th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.
Postmaster: send change of address to The German Tribune % MASS MAILINGS.

Articles in THE GERMAN TRIBUNE are translated from the original text and published by agreement with leading newspapers in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In all correspondence please quote your subscription number which appears on the wrapper, between asterisks, above your address.

■ BONN

Chancellor risks party row in choice of minister

Chancellor Kohl has again gone outside the Bundestag (Parliament) to choose a cabinet minister. Ursula-Maria Lehr, a university professor, takes over the portfolio of Family Affairs in place of Rita Süssmuth, who is now the Speaker. The Chancellor is the only cabinet member appointed by the Bundestag. He can pick ministers from outside the Bundestag.

Chancellor Kohl has shown courage, enterprise and imagination in appointing Ursula-Maria Lehr as Family Affairs Minister to succeed Rita Süssmuth, now Bundestag Speaker.

His success in the difficult search for a successor to Frau Süssmuth is partly due to the surprise factor. Professor Lehr is a newcomer to the political stage in Bonn, and an academic.

The Chancellor is evidently willing to run the gauntlet of dissatisfaction in the parliamentary party, which has again been ignored in the choice of a Cabinet Minister.

Herr Kohl's inclination to hire people who are not involved in federal politics has become such a habit that it might seem that a Christian Democrat who aims to get into Parliament is putting himself or herself at a disadvantage.

But the Chancellor can't be accused of using the ranks of politicians in the *Länder* to fill his cabinet ranks. If he did that, his room for choice would soon be narrow.

Herr Kohl is probably least worried by the trouble he may have with the parliamentary party. At present it cannot afford even a limited clash with the Chancellor, who is its very backbone.

Besides, the long drawn-out debate on who might succeed Frau Süssmuth showed the parliamentary party to be unable to come up with a suitable candidate. Neither Roswitha Verhülsdonk nor Agnes Hürland filled the bill.

The new Minister had to be moderately progressive yet equally acceptable for conservative women voters. She must also know something about the subject and have a track record that at least did not disqualify her for the portfolio.

So Herr Kohl and his advisers needed little imagination to predict that there would be no uproar among women members of the CDU/CSU parliamentary party. It received the Chancellor's notification of what was, by then, no longer news with a sigh of relief.

The parliamentary party has come to terms with the fact that it is remote-controlled from the Chancellor's Office.

The only contribution it can claim to have made toward solving the conflict that began with Speaker Philipp Jenninger's unfortunate speech to the Bundestag on the 50th anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* is that its leader and some of its members refused to stand for Speaker in Herr Jenninger's place.

The Chancellor persuaded Herr Jenninger to resign. He persuaded Frau Süssmuth to take over as Speaker. Professor Lehr was his choice as Family Affairs Minister to take over from Frau Süssmuth.

He did so at a pace that party-political onlookers noted with bated breath. When he presented his new Minister, ending the vacuum of empty chairs, MPs were still busy pondering over how the crisis had begun.

The party was worried Herr Kohl might be accused of having been overhasty in dropping Herr Jenninger, as he was on a previous occasion when Hans Filbinger resigned as Premier of Baden-Württemberg.

The CDU leader was accused at the time of dropping his fellow-Christian Democrat like a hot potato. Would he be similarly accused in Herr Jenninger's case?

Herr Jenninger has certainly received bags full of mail from correspondents who feel his speech was honourable and merely inept in its delivery.

Regardless of CDU criticism of the speed at which the Chancellor disposed of the Speaker — *en route* between Washington and New York — Herr Jenninger's resignation was right and indispensable.

What might the public reaction have been if he had hesitated! All he can fairly be accused of is failure to satisfactorily explain his reasons to a wider public.

Ever since Herr Kohl has emerged as a Chancellor who will tolerate no competition the political scene in Bonn has resembled nothing so much as a waxworks in which the public sees members of the government in action but has no idea of the rules by which they are guided.

That is doubtless why he has been criticised from branches of the party such as the Junge Union, the social committees, and the women's association even though he is probably the wrong target for criticism.

The party leadership at both Federal and *Land* government level is increasingly accused of having completely lost touch with reality. Is that an inevitable consequence of wielding power?



Wife, mother and now minister . . . Ursula Lehr. (Photo: Poly-Press)

The Chancellor noted with approval the comment by a Junge Union speaker at the youth organisation's Baden-Baden conference that the Barschel affair could recur anywhere at any time.

What the speaker meant was not the arbitrary way in which Premiers who wielded almost unlimited power tended to govern but the party's inability to exercise effective control over the powers that be.

Decision-making processes are increasingly taking place behind closed doors.

As the Chancellor was particularly secretive in the present case there is no way of telling exactly why he decided to appoint Ursula-Maria Lehr as Family Affairs Ministers.

There is no clear yardstick of suitability for the portfolio — other, perhaps, than the general explanation that a gerontologist is an apt choice in a country where the aged are steadily growing in number and young people growing fewer and fewer.

Klaus Dreher

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 30 November 1988)

Give us a chance before we grow old, pleads youth

Politicians are hanging on too long instead of handing over to younger people, say young members of the conservative union parties.

The congress of the Junge Union, the youth wing of the CDU/CSU, says that older politicians are keeping the young out of the running for office.

The CDU/CSU's elected representatives are, on average, 50-year-olds. Members of CDU/CSU governments also tend to be about that age.

Although that may be the right age for politicians, younger people sense that the road to the top will be blocked for a long time unless they speak out.

The gap between present leaders and the younger generation will be too wide if today's 50-year-olds stay put for a further 15 to 20 years.

By holding on to their jobs they will keep younger people out of the running for power, responsibility, office (and well-paid jobs). That cannot be good for relations between politicians and the younger generation.

The Social and Free Democrats are equally conscious of the problem. The Young Liberals say much the same. Willy Brandt's political "grandchildren," today's SPD leaders, are now around 50.

Premier Björn Engholm of Schleswig-Holstein, for instance, is 48. Mayor Henning Voscherau of Hamburg is over 50. Volker Hauff is 48.

The new CDU leader in the Rhineland-Palatinate, Hans-Otto Wilhelm, may have been elected with Junge Union support but he too is nearly 50.

Yet even though this generation gap is everywhere apparent, at schools and universities, for instance, Chancellor Kohl would do well to take the complaints seriously.

But, on the other hand, young people with political ambitions do not look impressive when they by belly-achein this way. The younger generation has never been granted office on a silver platter.

Helmut Kohl may have been elected Prime Minister of the Rhineland-Palatinate at 39, but not by wailing and gnashing of teeth; he worked hard and won majority support.

So why don't the young fight for a share of power and influence rather than wring their hands in appeals to the party? Is it a sign of the times? Do they feel others are obliged to help them to the top?

A rebellious speech is no proof of political qualifications. Neither is moaning and groaning.

Rudolf Bauer

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 28 November 1988)

An academic comes into the cabinet

Family Affairs Minister Ursula Lehr is a university don who has specialised throughout her academic life in the family, in the changing role and self-evaluation of women and in the aged.

She has published numerous field reports indicating how society has changed and is changing. She was one of the first research scientists in the country to deal with the psychology and situation of old people.

She sees old age as an opportunity and as a challenge. She is neither pessimistic nor resigned in her assessment of the situation.

She constantly reaffirms her view that old age need not be tantamount to being out of the running, that it can be productive and that retirement need not be equated with inactivity.

"Longevity imposes obligations on us all," she says.

She is no less well-prepared to take over at the Ministry of Youth, Family Affairs and Health than Rita Süssmuth was before her, and her published work shows she shares Frau Süssmuth's views.

Both have constantly called for the family to be strengthened as an institution and for women to be able both to work and have a family if they want to.

She soon realised that ways of life were changing in a society where the proportion of older people was steadily increasing.

She has demolished many longstanding views and prejudices while regularly submitting encouraging new ideas about approaches to living.

She wrote her second PhD thesis (the one German academics need to qualify as a professor) in the late 1960s on Women at Work, and she has supplied many factual arguments in favour of work and a family being reconcilable.

She has set a personal example as a wife and mother of two sons. She showed in one work that a satisfied working mother was in many cases better for her child than a dissatisfied housewife.

She has always strongly favoured men doing more housework. The dual role of work and housework must not be left to women alone.

Ursula Lehr, 58, comes from a Roman Catholic home. Her father was a banker. She took her *Abitur*, or higher school certificate, in Offenbach and studied in Bonn, where she was awarded her first chair in development psychology.

In 1971 she switched to Cologne and has taught and conducted research since 1985 at Heidelberg University as head of the gerontology department.

Her public appearances at congresses and in platform debates have invariably shown her to be a level-headed, authoritative person. She has a knack of soyerly, and at times stubbornly, persuading others to change their minds.

She is widely versed in other aspects of health policy, which should stand her in good stead at the Ministry.

She can be sure to take up where Frau Süssmuth left off in her work on behalf of the family in general and of women in particular.

Maria Frisé

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 30 November 1988)

GERMANY

East Berlin begins the bullying again

The East Berlin government has begun bullying its critics again. Security police are using none-too-subtle means to silence opposition. The government has even banned a Soviet magazine and some Soviet films. Why? Because the ageing *members of East Berlin's government are* trying to prevent any discussion about the Stalin era or about any aberration in the *history of the Communist Party. In this* article, Claus Wettermann, writing in the Cologne daily, the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, takes the occasion of Chancellor Kohl's state-of-the-nation speech to look at what is happening in East Germany.

In recent years, the Chancellor's state of the nation address has presented the relationship between the Federal Republic and East Germany in a favourable light.

This year, he found it difficult. Although his Deutschlandpolitik has been by and large successful, Herr Kohl was unable to ignore what is happening across the border, where the ageing, inflexible party *leadership is rejecting glasnost and perestroika.*

The atmosphere is East Germany is, as *a result, becoming more constrictive and* this, in turn, is affecting relations with other countries. It is automatically, although so far indirectly, worsening the conditions that a flourishing relationship between the two Germanies needs.

After East Berlin party chief Erich Honecker visited the Federal Republic in September last year, the East's government made tentative efforts to make life a bit easier for groups critical of it — and the atmosphere between the two German states markedly improved.

Now it's back to square one. Security police are heavy-handedly oppressing human rights campaigners who are calling for greater freedom and reforms in line with the new Soviet model.

Censorship of religious texts and prayers *are reminiscent of the dark days of the* ill-fated struggle between the Church and the state.

East Berlin has even banned a Soviet publication called *Sputnik*, which is favourable towards glasnost — a particularly restrictive aspect of the trench warfare being conducted against liberal tendencies. Several Soviet films have also been banned.

Honecker's regime hopes that what it is doing will nip in the bud any attempt to discuss the crimes of the Stalin era and the aberrations of the Communist past.

At the same time Honecker has all too demonstratively allied himself with Romania's despotic leader, Nicolae Ceausescu.

Honecker couldn't have done more to dissociate himself from Moscow and those reformers who have started to take up Gorbachov's ideas in most of the other Eastern European neighbouring Eastern *European countries.*

Honecker and his followers apparently feel so strong — or perhaps is it so uncer*tain? — that they are determined to pre*vent any spreading of glasnost and perestroika in East Germany by taking on Moscow head on.

Together with the nationalities conflict and the struggle against ideological opponents in the Soviet Union itself, this challenge from a brother nation comes at an inopportune moment for Mikhail Gorbachov.

Is the East German Communist Party perhaps hoping that Gorbachov's opponents will eventually gain the upper hand?

By strictly rejecting reforms with such *inflexibility the old men in East Berlin are* only fanning the flames of critical opposition in their own country.

Already faced by food supply problems the East German population is becoming increasingly disappointed, embittered about the politics pursued by their leaders. In some cases the result is resignation and apathy.

This discontentment is not only reflected in the generally silent protest action, but also in the growing desire to legally or illegally leave the country for good.

Some of the younger members of the Communist Party are also unhappy about the current disavowal of Moscow's reform policies, although there is no sign of an organised rebellion.

There are rumours and speculation about a replacement of Honecker, who is 76, in the near future.

His power base does not appear to be *so stable as it was a year ago and his public* appearances show that age is taking its toll.

For the time being, therefore, Bonn will *have to continue trying to come to some* arrangement with Honecker and his old guard.

The end of the Honecker era, which could begin at a Communist Party conference in 1990, is unlikely to usher in a new era of reform.

There is no one in sight among the candidates seriously considered for the succession who might be more favourable towards Gorbachov-style reforms.

Apart from the strained atmosphere, East Germany's internal problems would not at first glance appear to have that much influence on the relationship between Bonn and East Berlin.

Talks on specific issues continue as usual, and there has even been an advance in one field.

In return for the generous contribution by Bonn for the extension of the transit connection between Berlin and the West, East Berlin is no longer making the cleaning up of the River Elbe dependent on agreement to draw up the border in the middle of the river.

Agreement was reached to start environmental protection negotiations.

What is more, a record number of people is expected to travel from East Germany to the Federal Republic of Germany this year.

Yet despite official statements by East Berlin emphasising its desire to intensify relations with Bonn the current develop*ment there has a paralysing effect on poli*tical dialogue.

No-one's talking about a possible visit to East Germany by Helmut Kohl, which is more or less due as a return visit following Honecker's visit to Bonn.

Neither Honecker nor Kohl are able to concretise this project at the present time in view of the incalculable risks for both sides.

How should West German politicians react to the critical development in East Germany?

Bonn should criticise the restriction of human rights and the injustice.

At the same time, however, it should avoid a direct confrontation with the East German leaders and the additional strain on relations that would bring.

Politicians involved in the field of Deutschlandpolitik are faced by the difficult task of advocating change in East Germany without offending those who seek to prevent it.

Claus Wettermann
(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 29 November 1988)

New generation 'rejecting communist propaganda'

East Germans are becoming less and less afraid of facing the facts and openly admitting the contradiction between ideological claims and the harsh realities of life under a communist regime, says the Mayor of West Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen. In a speech in the Bundestag in Bonn, Diepgen said that decades of socialist education had been unable to guarantee loyalty to the regime. Now a younger generation was *emerging which was not "educated" in* this sense. And many of this generation saw the realities and either opposed the regime openly or retreated into a mood of resignation. This was one reason for a growing exodus to the West. Many of those who could not get out sought an "inner exile" or practised civil disobedience. The result was that East Germany was on the point of losing the services of some of its best thinkers. This report was written by Bernd Brügge for the *Lübecker Nachrichten*.

The Mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, *is the most competent* person to act as a spokesman for the desires and hopes of people in the "other part of Germany". West Berliners are closer than anyone else to the Germans in East Germany.

It seemed that here in the Bundestag on the occasion of Chancellor Kohl's state-of-the-nation speech, members were waiting for Diepgen to take on this role with greater conviction.

In his speech, Chancellor Kohl had already admitted that many of the hopes stimulated by Erich Honecker's visit to Bonn in September last year had not been fulfilled.

Despite the increase in the number of visitors from East Germany, there is a general feeling of disappointment at the way in which the East Berlin leader*ship is trying to prevent any liberalisa*tion along Soviet lines.

In his "Report on the State of the GDR" Diepgen outlined the contradictions. On the one hand, an increase in coercive measures by the state security police; on the other, liberalisation in the legal policy field.

On the one hand, official permission to perform critical plays in East German theatres; on the other, petty-minded censorship.

On the one hand, a critical appraisal of great personalities such as Luther and Bismarck; on the other, a refusal to discuss controversial questions of contemporary history such as the Hitler-Stalin pact.

On the one hand, a toleration of the *reception of western television and, on* the other, a ban on certain Soviet films.

Although it is often claimed that the situation in East Germany cannot be compared with the situation in the Soviet Union, the sight of long queues outside of the shops is no longer a rarity.

Diepgen only touched on the possible reasons for the growing isolation of the East German regime.

At a much later stage than in the West, he said, the East is experiencing an alternation of generations.

The decades of socialist education have been unable to guarantee loyalty to the regime. On the contrary, the propaganda has provoked criticism.

According to Diepgen the younger *generation in East Germany is "in the* good sense — an un-educated generation."

East Germans are becoming less and less afraid of facing facts and openly admitting the contradiction between ideological claims and harsh realities of socialism in its present form.

Their reaction fluctuates between opposition and resignation, and Diepgen is convinced that this is one of the major reasons for the rising growing exodus to the West.

Many East Germans who are not granted an exit permit seek inner exile and demonstrate civil disobedience.

In Diepgen's words, East Germany is on the verge of losing some of its best "thinkers" as a result of "inward *and outward emigration*".

None of the Deutschlandpolitik experts gathered in the Bundestag contradicted this analysis.

What is more, they also supported the conclusions Diepgen drew for activities inside and outside the realm of politics.

"Don't forget us. This is a sentence which every West German who speaks with Germans in the GDR hears. We must take this reminder more seriously."

Bernd Brügge
(Lübecker Nachrichten, 2 December 1988)

An old Stalinist screeches against reform

Frankfurter Allgemeine

A major aspect of Chancellor Kohl's state-of-the-nation speech in the Bundestag was the continuing oppression in East Germany.

The Chancellor was so frank that the American news agency, the Associated Press, said: "Kohl accuses GDR of Repression."

Nobody has spoken about Honecker like that before. But the East German *leader the very same day seemed only to* confirm everything Kohl had said.

Honecker attacked the very idea of *any reform with a previously unknown* ferocity which made remarks by another party member, Hager, seem almost reserved.

Hager had said, in reference to the Soviet reforms, that East Germany was "not joining in the wallpapering of the houses of socialism."

Honecker called references to re-examining the history of the Soviet Communist party as the "chatter gone wild of petit bourgeois who wish to rewrite history in the bourgeois sense."

Hager made Gorbachov look like a painter-decorator. Honecker made him look like a toad.

Honecker is afraid of "marching into anarchy." For Stalinists, the inability to continue totalitarian rule is nothing other than anarchy.

It was an interesting German Thursday in the Bundestag.

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 2 December 1988)

PERSPECTIVE

US entitled to ask Germans to pay more towards Euro defence, says Wörner

The Americans are entitled to ask why a wealthy Germany should not pay more *towards the cost of defence in Europe*, says Manfred Wörner, secretary-general of Nato and a former Bonn Defence Minister. He told the business weekly, *Wirtschaftswoche*, that an independent system of defence must be paid for to keep peace *and support policies of disarmament con*trol. But he warned that military potential continued to grow in the Soviet Union: "Gorbachov has not yet scrapped a single tank or withdrawn a single soldier. He should do what the Chinese did. They cut their army by a million in 10 years." On the question of Soviet intentions, Wörner said: "Intentions can change from one day to the next. Leaders can be replaced."

Wirtschaftswoche: Herr Wörner, have the Germans moved closer to Nato since you were appointed Nato secretary-general?

Wörner: Our significance and our role in the alliance has become more visible.

Q: But your successor as Defence Minister, Rupert Scholz, would apparently like to reduce Bonn's Nato commitments — the Bundeswehr troop strength, for example.

A: In accordance with his role the secretary-general of the alliance does not comment on national decisions.

As secretary-general, however, I hope that the contribution of the Feder*al Republic of Germany to the alliance* will remain undiminished. Indeed, that it will be stepped up in parts.

*This applies to the strength and oper*ational capacity of the Bundeswehr as well as to the political contribution.

Q: Allow us to take up the second aspect, the political contribution.

Officially, Bonn is waiting for an overall concept for armament and disarmament. Bonn Foreign Minister Genscher, however, has given to understand that a modernisation of nuclear weapons runs contrary to the spirit of the agreement on short-range missiles.

Are you again obliged to say I'd like to pass comment but I'm not allowed to?

A: No, I gather from what Chancellor Kohl and others have said that Germany still has an interest in an overall concept. I am certain that the Federal Republic will play its part in ensuring that this overall concept materialises on time.

Q: Even during Chancellor Kohl's visit to Moscow attempts were made to stall *the modernisation discussion. But you* were able to prevent this.

A: I am responsible for making sure *that the alliance carefully considers the* decisions needed and takes them in time.

Together with the ministers of the alli*ance I ensured that the decision-making* process continued both with respect to an overall concept and to the question of a possible modernisation.

Q: Now a number of other European governments are also faced by difficulties regarding the modernisation of nuclear weapons.

A: In the alliance there are, of course, varying views.

Incidentally, I find that the dramatisation of such a decision does not do justice to the actual situation.

The heads of state and government leaders have clearly stated that we cannot do without nuclear weapons in the future and that weapons have to be renewed once they have become obsolete.

The Warsaw Pact does this without *asking us for our opinion.*

Q: Beneath the surface there is a lot of irritation in the USA. Many Americans *feel that the Europeans, especially the* Germans, are earning good money but are not doing enough for common defence.

Doesn't this lead to problems within the alliance, particularly since the USA has not taken to the idea of the 'common European house' forwarded by Mikhail Gorbachov?

A: The discussion on sharing costs is really a discussion on Europe's role in the alliance.

The Americans are obviously entitled to ask whether a stronger Europe shouldn't bear greater burdens and responsibilities.

As far as Gorbachov and the common European house is concerned, all I can say is: there can be no common European *house without the involvement of the* Americans.

And I'm only willing to talk about a common European house once the Berlin wall has been pulled down.

What are your comments on a claim made by an influential general in the Bundeswehr after Helmut Kohl's return from Moscow that the Bundeswehr's stereotype image of the enemy is now starting to crumble?

A: The Bundeswehr has never needed such an image. Nato was interested in relaxing East-West relations and helped bring about this change. Without Nato there would be no glasnost or perestroika.

Nato doesn't need false concepts of threat. For people in Germany the main threat is the danger of war, and at the mo*ment this does not exist. Gorbachov has* got other worries.

When we talk about threat we do not *mean intentions but military potential.* And it continues to grow in the Soviet Union.

Gorbachov has not scrapped a single tank yet or withdrawn a single soldier.

He should follow the example of the Chinese, who reduced the size of their army by a million in 10 years.

Q: The German population is more interested in Soviet intentions ...

A: Intentions can change from one day to the next. Leaders can be replaced — that's something we cannot influence.

We would be doing nobody, including Gorbachov, a favour by unilaterally reducing our defence efforts.

Q: Bonn's defence budget is at its lowest level since 1982. Where is the money for the burden-sharing envisaged by Washington going to come from?

A: I expect from all political leaders in the alliance member states, including the Federal Republic of Germany, not to ask what people just happen to be thinking at the moment, but that they exercise political leadership.

They must explain to the population that we must sustain an independent system of defence if we want to preserve peace and support policies of change and disarmament control.

Isn't that a contradiction in terms?

A: It only seems to be. When arms control negotiations have been successful the armament burdens can be reduced. If need be, however, unpopular decisions *must be taken.*

Q: What does the Nato secretary-general think about the idea of a Europeanisation of security policy, as advocated, for example, by the CDU member of the Bundestag Karl Lamers?

A: I am firmly convinced that a strengthening of Europe is in the interest of the alliance as a whole. A stronger Europe is better for the alliance than a weaker Europe. Just as a stronger America is better. European political cooperation, however, must be compatible with the general interest of the alliance.

Q: What does that mean?

A: It must be conducive and not detrimental to American engagement in Europe. Notions of an independent European defence are unrealistic and even dangerous. We should not create a club within a club.

In the final analysis, however, all Euro*pean members of Nato support this Euro*pean Nato cornerstone.

Q: But France has regularly declared *that is would not make use of nuclear* weapons to save, say, Bonn ...

A: I shall not comment on the opinion of the French president. France defines its own nuclear policy in line with its own sovereign ideas. France is an extremely loyal member of the political alliance.

Q: Since the death of Franz Josef Strauss, one of the most active advocates of the European Fighter Aircraft, there are growing signs that this project may in the end fail. How do you rate the consequences of such a decision for European defence?

A: This is another attempt to involve me in a controversial national policy issue. I cannot comment on it.

Q: And the European dimension?

A: The secretary-general is not responsible for the success or failure of a project but for security. Which aircraft Europeans buy is not a matter for him.

Q: Not only the example of the European Fighter Aircraft shows that sophisticated technology makes weapons systems *increasingly expensive. How can this* trend be reversed?

A: Only by greater cooperation, which must begin in the alliance-wide development. This is the only method. It is a difficult and bumpy road and we have only made a little headway so far.

The necessity of dwindling defence budgets may even lead to the virtue of economising by cooperation.

Q: In the field of electronics in general the prices are tumbling. Only the weapon systems with their increasing amount of electronic equipment are becoming more and more expensive.

A: In return, however, the efficiency of these weapon systems is much greater.

Compare a modern aircraft, for example, with the kind of aircraft I even flew myself, the G 91 or the Tornado.

What is more, one must remember that East and West face the same problem. Mikhail Gorbachov has also started to do some exact calculating.

Friedrich Thelen/Roland Tichy
(Wirtschaftswoche, Düsseldorf, 25 November 1988)

■ FINANCE

Germany shoots to top of corporation tax league in spite of reductions

Tax reductions are about to catapault German business into the position of being the highest-taxed in the industrialised world.

The reason for this apparent contradiction is that Austria, which used to head the tax league, is to slash its corporation tax at the same time — by enough to push it down the list.

The Bonn reforms bring corporation tax down from 56 per cent to 50 per cent. Total tax on profits, including trade tax and property tax, will drop from 70 to 66 per cent.

By comparison, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky's socialist government in Vienna is reducing corporation tax from 55 to 30 per cent. The entire system is also being simplified and the tax-free allowance doubled.

Until now, Austria has been the only country with a higher corporation taxes than Germany.

The Austrian reform means that com*panies will only pay about half as much* as they used to. The rate is still high by international standards, but no longer crippling.

IBM chief Hans-Olaf Henkel said that business profits were burdened in three ways: working time, wages and taxes. Henkel has been vocal in the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the Federal Republic as a centre for industrial and commercial operations.

The Institute for German Industry, Cologne, closely connected with German industry generally, has now pro*duced a new international taxation com*parison, which presents the Federal Republic in anything but an advantageous light.

Businessmen in Britain, Spain and the Netherlands are taxed the lowest at 35 per cent.

In all three countries, incidentally, companies do not have to pay tax when they have made no profits — such as the trading capital tax payable in the Federal Republic.

According to the Cologne institute Switzerland is also a country where very low corporation taxes are levied. West *German businessmen pay twice as much* tax as their Swiss colleagues.

Compared with the taxes paid by the Federal Republic's competitors, German taxes are on average 21 per cent higher.

The Cologne institute has established that not only in Austria have companies been given greater tax relief than in the Federal Republic. The institute's investigations showed that:

- In the Netherlands the rate of corporation tax was reduced from 42 to 35 per cent on 1 October this year.
- The rate has been reduced by a num*ber of stages in Britain, the last time in* 1986 from 50 to 35 per cent. Small businesses with profits less than ¢100,000 only have to pay 25 per cent tax.
- In the United States corporation tax was reduced from 46 per cent to 34 per cent last year, but at the same time a whole series of tax benefits were abolished.
- In Canada corporation tax has been reduced in two stages from 46 to 38 per cent.

Other countries are planning similar measures. In Japan, for instance, companies have to pay 42 per cent of their



profits in taxes, but from 1 April next year the rate is to be reduced to 40 per cent, and a year later to 37.5 per cent.

Michel Rocard's socialist government in Paris has promised reductions in corporation tax from 42 to 39 per cent.

In their comparison the Cologne institute's experts assume that companies are operated as joint stock companies, that is as a GmbH or an AG, and that profits are not distributed, but remain *wholly in the company — undoubtedly* an unrealistic supposition in most cases.

But even if the tax burden on distributed profits is included in assessments not much is changed.

In the Federal Republic profits distributed to shareholders are taxed in personal income tax with a top rate of 56 per cent. Corporation tax already paid can be taken into account.

Since trade tax and other taxes have *not been changed, the total tax burden* totals 70.8 per cent, just as when profits are retained.

This tax picture also applies to partnerships, including limited partnerships, general partnerships or sole proprietorships.

The situation is somewhat different in other countries. According to the Cologne institute, the tax burden in Britain and the USA increases if a part of the *profits are distributed. In both countries* an allowance on corporation tax is not possible at all or only partially.

If a third of the profits are distributed taxes up to 39.3 per cent have to be paid; in the United States up to 51.9 per cent.

The authors of the Cologne institute's study wrote: "The graph of the tax burden for the Federal Republic and other countries narrows when profits are distributed, but nevertheless compared in*ternationally the Federal Republic* remains at the top of the list of tax payers."

International comparisons of tax *burdens are distorted by another diffi*culty; the definition of what are profits is in no way standardised.

Federal Republic companies, for instance, can pour considerable sums of money into pension funds, and so limit reported profits.

In addition German companies come off well as regards depreciation allowances. Machinery, which has been in operation for ten years, can be depreciated against profits after one year by 30 per cent.

Only Ireland has more favourable depreciation conditions. Denmark and Austria have conditions similar to those in the Federal Republic.

In France, Italy and Britain a 25 per *cent depreciation can be applied after a* year, in the Netherlands and Belgium only 20 per cent, in Spain just eight per cent.

The same is true for depreciation on buildings. In the Federal Republic companies can write off investment in buildings within 25 years; the tax authorities in the Benelux allow a write-off only after 33 years, in Portugal after 50 and in Japan only after 65 years.

There are "cheaper" countries. Sweden, Austria, France and Italy allow a write-off after only 20 years and in Ireland a building can be written off almost immediately, that is within two years.

The tax experts in the Cologne institute came to the conclusion that all in all depreciation allowances in the Federal Republic were "more favourable" than in other countries.

The Federal Republic *does not come* off so well as regards possibilities of charging losses to previous or future profits, that is forming a profit and loss account in the balance sheet.

Reported profits, the figure on which corporation tax is assessed, are reduced by special provisions such as depreciation and the option of including pension fund provisions.

Generous provisions in the calculation of the basis for tax assessment compensate for high taxes.

There is a lot to indicate that the 70 per cent calculation puts the Federal Republic, when compared internationally as regards tax liabilities, in a much more unfavourable position than is actually the case.

On the other hand the Federal Republic's competitive position as regards taxation is not good.

Disadvantage

That part of tax liability within the Federal Republic's system which is not dependent on earnings, and which in bad years has to be paid out of assets, is particularly high within the total tax burden. This puts the Federal Republic *at a disadvantage.*

As in Japan this aspect of tax liability contributes to a good fifth of total tax liability.

Only French taxation law includes a greater part of tax liability which is not calculated on the basis of earnings, *caused by the traditional "Taxe professionelle."*

In the taxes companies have to pay in Switzerland, Sweden and Canada the part of their liability not directly related to profits is only 10 per cent.

Most countries do not apply taxes *such as trading capital tax or property* tax.

Uwe Vorkötter

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 24 November 1988)

Dispute likely to become a trade war

Trade war is again threatening to break out between Europe and America over a dispute that involves a piddling amount of total trade between the two.

Brussels has decided that as from 1 January meat treated by hormones can no longer be imported.

This will mainly hit beef from the United States. It trade value: 260 million *marks a year.*

The Americans are determined to hit back. If the Community does not give in at the 11th hour, they will ban tomatoes from Italy, fruit juice from Germany and meat from Denmark.

In turn, Europe is threatening to retaliate to the retaliation.

In 1980 high doses of diethyl-stilboestrol (DES), suspected of causing cancer, were found in baby food made with veal.

Reacting to this first major veal scandal the EC banned the use of artificial hormones in calf feed. After the regulation was approved by the European Parliament the ban was applied in 1988 to include natural growth hormones as well.

After exerting considerable pressure the United States got a delay for a year for its exporters.

The delayed battle has now flared up fiercely, and the Europeans seem to have bad cards in their hand, no matter how distasteful this may sound to German ears. There is much to be said for the American point of view that the hormone ban is an impediment to trade, although this is not what was intended by the environment associations through whose initiatives the total ban has been applied.

The principles of free trade, to which Europe and the USA have bound themselves, do not prevent any state from protecting its citizens from products that are a danger to health or the envi*ronment.*

The problem is solely that the contention that calves and beef cattle treated with hormones are a danger to health is on uncertain ground.

There is no dispute that there is a danger from synthetic hormones, which are also banned in America. But it is quite a different matter with natural hormones.

Negative effects from natural hor*mones could only be possible, if at all,* if they were consumed in quantity, if the flesh around the place where the animal was injected was eaten; there would be there a high concentration of hormones. Modern methods of rearing animals for consumption are barbaric. The idea that the growth of castrated calves is improved by hormone injections is distasteful.

*So long as consumers do not dem*onstrate that they are affronted by these practices, individual bans take on the character of being unfounded impediments to trade.

These regulations contradict liberalisation agreements made within the context of Gatt, from which the European Community itself benefits the most.

But the brute force with which the US has pushed through its own commercial interests in the hormone dispute is also dangerous.

The practice of forcing through "fair" trading conditions through massive *pressure in bilateral discussions is an in*fringement on the Americans' part of the principle of a multilateral trading system, particularly with the background of the tough protectionism which the Americans apply in other sectors.

The Americans discriminate against smaller countries with limited trading clout by their trade policies, endangering the current liberalisation negotiations in Gatt, and *poisoning the atmosphere for* trade, even through they are in the right this time round.

Nikolaus Piper

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 25 November 1988)

■ ENERGY

Oil market remains one of 'speculation and illusion'



The Opec compromise in Vienna is an unrealistic one. All 13 members of the Organisation of Petroleum-Exporting Countries knew that the maximum market for Opec oil was 16 million barrels a day.

But they agreed to set the production limit at 18.5 million barrels.

Thomas Kohlmorgen, head of Esso in Germany, says that the oil industry's estimate of world surplus oil is 1.4 billion tons, *which is more than Opec's annual* production.

Even if the Third World increased its consumption 3 three per cent, it is impossible to see how the reduction of Opec production from the present 21 million barrels to 18.5 million will calm the glutted oil market and bring about price stability.

The reduction of 2.5 million barrels per day is equal to 125 million tons per year — *not even a tenth of the world* overproduction estimated by Kohlmorgen.

If it is assumed that Opec members stick by the compromise, which is not absolutely certain, since all compromises would be swept away by the flood of oil in a time of surplus, the question of more stable oil prices then still remains to be answered.

If the price rises, then all oil-produc*ing countries become more interested in* increasing production. One only has to think of the financial position of the non-Opec oil-producing countries such as Mexico, Norway or Britain.

Worldwide 50,000 oil wells have been closed, because they were unprofitable when the oil price was only $10 per barrel (a barrel of oil is 159 litres).

If the market were to rise to the $18 per barrel level, which Opec would like to see, these wells would begin produc*ing again.*

The oil market was and remains a market of illusion and speculation. Klöckner & Co has made that obvious *to all.*

That the price for Brent crude from the North Sea has risen slightly and oil share prices in the USA have become more stable, can only be attributed to the hope that the lean years for oil prices are past.

But this does not take into consideration the realities or the fact that it is not known how much oil the consumer-nations have bunkered, and that this oil *will be used firstly before they buy more* expensive supplies.

If it is assumed that Opec, in a disciplined way, holds to the spirit of the Vienna compromise, and the remaining oil-producing countries pursue a moderate production policy, then the oil price has a chance of generally getting back on its feet. There would then be oil prices in line with the internatinal economic situation.

If the price rose to $20 a barrel then 3,000 drilling rigs, which are at present moth-balled because the oil industry is not investing in exploration, would be back in operation.

The oil industry can only come to life again with higher prices. New wells are not only of importance for covering oil demand for transportation and the chemicals industry in the longer-term, but they will help to rein in the oil price in the *future. There is an*other aspect as well. The search for oil also stimulates gas exploration and exploitation.

All energy experts are agreed that natural gas will eventually supplant oil. Safeguarding future energy requirements is then directly linked to higher oil prices.

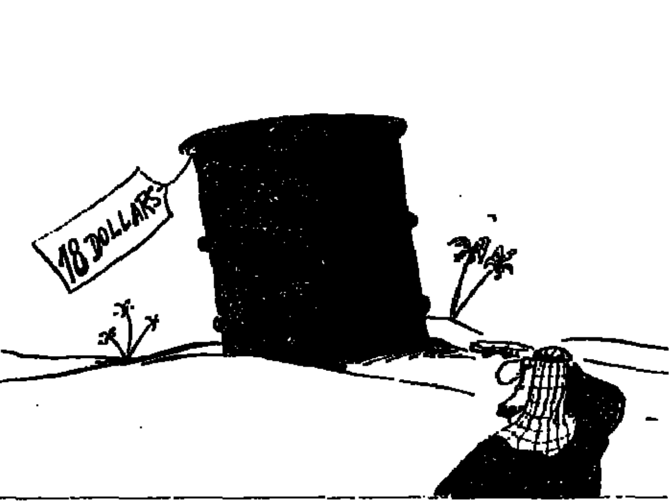
The market does not care a hoot about such considerations however, othewise it would not have let the oil price drop to such an undreamt-of low level below ten dollars.

A glance at the USA shows just how ill-prepared even the experts were for such a sharp drop in prices. In America oil companies have calculated their long-term investment in buildings, pro*duction plant and equipment for the* 1980s based on an oil price of up to $50 per barrel.

The results are well known. There is no stopping nuclear energy and the use of natural gas in the Federal Republic alone has reached the level of domestic coal.

In Texas it was calculated that the oil price in the 1980s would be $25 per barrel. The oil-price drop below the $10 per barrel level has meant the loss of 300,000 jobs. The American oil consul-

Continued on page 8



Desert visions.

(Cartoon: Nick Ebert / Rheinische Post)

Current choice: all switch off together

The government in Bonn recognises the need to open up the German electricity supply market after 1992.

But it has no intention of unilaterally getting rid of German protective barriers if the other European countries are not prepared to discuss getting rid of theirs as well.

Bonn Economic Affairs Minister Martin Bangemann made this clear to other European Community national *ministers at a meeting in Brussels.*

He had in mind the state electricity monopoly in France, the network monopoly in Denmark and differing tax and environmental protection measures.

He told journalists that adjustment process for coal could not be arranged overnight.

With this stance, showing fundamentally a readiness for compromise, Bangemann was trying to accommodate French pressures.

The French do not miss an opportunity of saying that the subsidy mechanism in the "Jahrhundertvertrag," an agree*ment with the power industry, is con*trary to the European treaties.

At French insistance the European Commission is examining the admissibility of the "Kohlepfennig" and the sales regulations associated with it.

Since EC officials have not contradicted the German regulations, Bangemann has assumed that Bonn will not have to face up to a total cancellation of these regulations.

Additional provisions to the current "Jahrhundertvertrag," which runs until 1995, must be negotiated at the latest by 1991.

There is however a *conflict of aims* between the efforts for more competition within the EC and similar efforts by the Community to ensure for consumers secure supplies of fuel.

Bangemann said that the Federal Republic needed a transitional period. The steelworks contract regulations for 1991 are the most that one could demand of the hard coal industry.

And calls to halt reducing capacities for the conversion of coal into electricity are not being considered. In a resolution on the single market for energy the controversial theme was omitted.

The *aim was to express at first funda*mental readiness for the dismantling of existing obstacles for access to the market.

The Commission has already made efforts to produce a list of these obstacles.

(Die Welt, Bonn, 9 November 1988)

It's a cold wind across the coal-face

A cold wind is blowing across the coal face. The sharp fall in energy prices and the drop in the dollar exchange rate *have made anthracite expensive.*

There is now a wobble in the scaffolding of agreement which governs the use of anthracite in the electricity industry.

This agreement is called the "Jahrhundertvertrag." It runs from 1980 until 1995, during which time electricity-generating companies are committed to buying 512 million tons of German domestic coal. This protects the domestic in*dustry from imports.*

The point at issue is the financial arrangement known as the "Kohlepfennig," a charge added to electricity bills sent out to German consumers to cover the financial arrangements under the "Jahrhundertvertrag." This offsets the cost difference between expensive domestic coal and heavy heating oil.

Trouble with this arrangement means trouble with the volume of coal.

In 1987 *power stations* used more than 41 million tons of domestic anthracite. That was more than a half of the production from German mines, and more than two-thirds of the coal produced in Saar coal mines.

If this agreement is overturned, it would mean the end of the domestic coal-mining industry, which employs 150,000.

It is well known that coal is the only energy reserve of any size in Germany and that this must be seen as a communal reserve for the European Community.

Only within the framework of this financial agreement is the use of coal possible.

No-one denies that a secure and inexpensive energy supply is an indispensible basis for the viability of a modern economy.

The two oil crises have taught us that *energy policies can only be geared to* ensuring the long-term needs of the economy, even if many would like to disregard this.

In times of energy surpluses the competitive argument is dominated by the word "cheap" and the word "secure" is pushed into the background.

The mining and energy trade union, IG Bergbau und Energie, has calculated that from 1978 to 1987 converting German coal into electricity would have been cheaper than converting heavy heating oil.

Safeguarding the supply of energy al*so involves coal mining, which is falling* victim to low prices on world energy markets.

Safeguarding the supply of energy also implies not depending on a single energy source, particularly nuclear energy, which is one of the economic bases for the conversion of coal into electricity — and the Jahrhundertvertrag covers coal and nuclear energy.

Anyone in the coal-producing federal *states who is up in arms against the use* of nuclear energy in federal states distant from the coal mines, should not expect to regain the former, uniform priority given to coal in the Federal Republic's energy policies.

The use of nuclear energy is being reconsidered. Longer-term concepts will have to be sought for if social hardships are to be avoided. Scrapping nuclear energy overnight is not the answer.

Here we see again the spirit of the times determined by short-winded coal policies, which can provide neither the coal mining companies with perspective *nor coal-miners with confidence,* a policy saddled with the current financial strain on the Jahrhundertvertrag. But this is political reality.

It is of vital importance to find once more a consensus of opinion for Federal Republic energy policies.

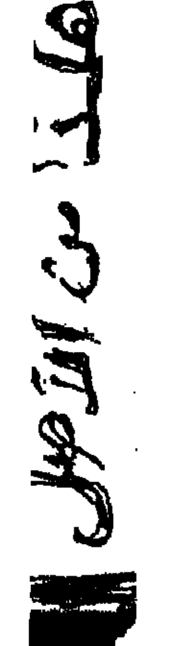
This can only be achieved if soundings are made in discussions about which role prime energy sources will take up in the long or short-term, and not by marking out unshakeable positions.

And only in this way can coal gain its proper position as a secure energy source.

And only in this way can coal gain recognition as a vital energy source within the Community, which then will have the responsibility of being concerned about safeguarding it.

Volker Daur

(Saarbrücker Zeitung, 25 November 1988)



■ TRANSPORT

Road-toll, road-tax juggling act to give German hauliers an even break



Bonn Transport Minister Jürgen Warnke has finally decided to introduce a road toll for heavy goods vehicles. It will apply from 1990 with a view to improving the competitive position of German road hauliers.

They will have to pay the same amount as foreign truckers, but German road tax will be reduced accordingly, leaving them paying the same sum as beforehand.

So the aim is to make foreign road hauliers pay for using German roads, given that most neighbouring countries charge German truckers for using theirs.

The single internal market planned for the end of 1992 will deregulate national restrictions within the European Community. It is intended to shed light on the jungle of tariffs, concessions and cabotage regulations.

It hangs over the heads of German hauliers like the sword of Damocles. They are particularly worried about *Dutch competition, which already makes* life difficult for them in Europe.

Hauliers and politicians are agreed in calling for harmonisation of taxes and duties on vehicles and fuel, of insurance premiums for goods and trucks and of welfare provisions for drivers.

Harmonisation on all these points is a "must" before deregulation can be considered, they argue.

Otherwise the Dutch could well emerge triumphant from the post-1992 free-for-all, showing German hauliers a *clean pair of rear tyres. The road toll is* planned as a harmonisation measure. Herr Warnke intends to use it to exert pressure on the European Commission to force the pace of harmonisation.

The toll is initially to apply until the end of 1993 pending an all-European solution. The Standing Conference of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHT) calls it "blackmail."

True, the introduction of a road toll is the very opposite of deregulation. It amounts to a third tax on motorists, coming *on top of road tax and oil duty.*

It also discriminates against hauliers, as against private motorists, who aren't charged road tolls in the Federal Republic.

Politicians may rule out the idea, but the government might well, after biding its time for a while, decide to extend the arrangement to private motorists.

They would arguably be using the roads free of charge (and would certainly seem a lucrative source of extra revenue).

Herr Warnke would prefer the toll to be regarded as a regulatory measure with no fiscal objectives. As road tax on heavy goods vehicles is to be reduced accordingly, tax revenue will, he says, be unchanged.

That isn't entirely true. Even if revenue from German hauliers remains unchanged, the toll revenue paid by foreign truckers will net several hundred million marks a year.

In view of traffic congestion and environmental damage due to vehicle emission the Transport Ministry was not prepared to *rejig taxes to promote road haulage.*

There have been frequent calls for a reduction in road tax on heavy goods vehicles to an average European level, road toll or not, but Finance Minister Stoltenberg refused to consider a move that would reduce tax revenue substantially.

Yet the Transport Ministry was reluctant to go the whole hog and charge everyone — German motorists and foreigners — to improve the competitive position of the railways and to help ease the burden *of environmental pollution.*

The result has been neither one thing nor the other. Traffic will not be reduced. Neighbouring countries are annoyed and, in Holland's case, have threatened to take the case to the European Court of Justice.

The harmonisation of taxes envisaged by the European Commission will be made more difficult by the introduction of yet another tax. (Whether that is a blessing in disguise is another matter.)

There is already talk of imposing retaliatory taxes on Germans in other European countries. If this were to happen the German road toll would only temporarily offset the relative competitive advantage enjoyed by others, which was its stated purpose. It would simply lead to higher taxes throughout Europe.

German road hauliers would do better to consider other competitive measures, such as dispensing with regulation entirely. A road toll might not then need to be introduced as a non-tariff barrier.

The Transport Minister feels it is not in keeping with the market economy for foreign trucks to pay nothing toward the upkeep of German roads, but there is no way of telling how much of their share German motorists pay toward the upkeep of roads all over Europe.

That is why the Free Democrats prefer not to raise the issue. If German hauliers charge competitive prices they will be *awarded contracts and use Dutch roads* too. If they don't, they will simply not be competitive.

Deregulation of transport markets need not mean absolutely equal conditions for all. What it must do is breathe life into the system of regulated competition in Germany, where it was supposed (but has failed) to shore up the railways.

In the past six years road haulage has increased by well over 60 per cent in the Federal Republic, whereas the railways have increased *the tonnage they handle* by only about one per cent.

That shows how ineffective regulation is. It certainly does road hauliers no good.

The political liberalisation of transport markets in Europe is to be welcomed, and it need not amount to harmonisation at the highest cost level and on the basis of strictest monopoly conditions.

Carl Graf Hohenthal

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 8 November 1988)

Lufthansa gets a wing over Berlin

EuroBerlin France, a subsidiary of Lufthansa and Air France, inaugurated its first regular flights to and from Berlin on 7 November. It was not given the go-ahead by the three Western Allied air attachés until the previous evening, said Air France's press spokesman Wolfgang Häg in Frankfurt. But the inaugural flight from Berlin to Frankfurt was airborne on schedule at 9.35 *a.m, with a crew of British cockpit* and French and German cabin staff.

Interests are closely interlocked in the air space over the divided city. The United States, determined to gain a foothold in European civil aviation, insisted several months ago on a substantial increase in TWA flights along the Berlin air corridors.

Germany's own Lufthansa has long been keen to corner a share of Berlin traffic, which was handled solely by Allied *airlines in keeping with the city's* Four-Power status.

Lufthansa joined forces with Air France, setting up a joint subsidiary in which it holds a 49-per-cent stake. Embarrassingly, the new airline's inaugural flight was called over the loudspeaker at Tegel airport, Berlin, as a Lufthansa flight.

As Eastern Europe is keen to get a look-in at the Airbus, the Western Allies were not expecting the Soviet protest against the Franco-German newcomer to have unduly dramatic consequences.

No-one is expecting the Russians to quit the Allied air safety centre in Schöneberg, the last remaining post-war Four-Power authority that is still functioning.

Tension between the Western Allies seemed more likely to create difficulties. The erstwhile partners who shared Berlin air traffic between them are now tooth-and-nail rivals.

Arduously, at the last minute and after numerous crisis sessions *the three* aviation attachés managed just in time to reach a compromise over the winter timetable.

EuroBerlin France now runs 210 flights a week, adding substantially to what is already an oversupply of flights to and from the city.

The Americans have hinted that they see it as a European challenge levelled against US interests. That for one makes an ongoing fight for supremacy in air traffic to and from Berlin seem more than likely.

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 8 November 1988)

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tancy company H.F. Keplinger & Associates has calculated that a price difference of five dollars could influence the *Texan economy* by $100bn, *positively* or negatively.

It can be deduced from these figures that the whole oil industry is at the starting post to regain the position it once had.

But everyone knows that the physical balance between supply and demand can hardly be reached before the middle of the 1990s. What then is the point of the compromise in Vienna?

Hans Baumann

(Die Welt, Bonn, 26 November 1988)

■ MOTORING

BMW's chameleon — with a little sleight of hand

General-Anzeiger

The BMW Z 1 roadster's bodywork consists of 13 plastic sections and a few smaller parts. So you can change its colour like your daughter can change her favourite doll's clothes.

If you're not happy with a gorgeous red you can change to a superb dark green or switch to a metallic finish in beautiful black.

It involves a little sleight of hand with a screwdriver and ordering a second set of car body parts. But it can be done, and roadster fans will feel the effort is *well worth while.*

Viewed from a different angle, this surprising convertible is easy to look after. Thirteen plastic sections cover a galvanised sheet steel chassis with an adhesive-secured sandwich plastic base manufactured by the Munich aerospace group Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm.

No panel-beating is needed after a collision. Plastic bodywork sections are simply replaced, costing the owner and his insurance less than would otherwise inevitably be the case.

Does that make the Z 1 a car of the future, with the "Z" standing for *Zukunft* (future)?

Initially the "Z" was just a company code used by the Munich carmaker's design and development division, BMW Technik GmbH. But it certainly stands for a step forward, and a step in the right direction, or so we feel.

The Z 1, manufactured in a short run, naturally involves more work by hand than a longer run. But everything under its injection-moulded skin is computer-*matched and, for the most part, tried* and tested in long runs.

The engine, five-speed gearbox and wide-track front wheel suspension are borrowed from the BMW 325i and 525i.

The rear axle, with its dual lateral and cast aluminium longitudinal guide rods, was specially developed for the Z 1, which has a rear wheel track 5.5cm wider than that of BMW's 3 range.

The brakes are those of the 325i too, but with reinforced rear discs.

The accurate hydraulic rack steering *is geared to the rev count and extremely* comfortable.

Another technical feature is a lightweight metal tube, non-bending and non-twisting, running between the manual gearbox and the rear-axle differential and housing the cardan shaft.

As the engine and gearbox are behind the front axle and the sporting seats (plus driver and co-driver) and battery are in front of the rear axle, the Z 1 is predictable and easy to handle even *when cornering at high speed.*

Its unladen axle load is 49 per cent in front and 51 per cent at the rear.

It can be driven "topless" virtually without a draught, which is a decided advantage. This is the result of extensive aerodynamic trials.

Even if the side windows and doors are recessed the driver and co-driver will not feel much of a breeze, whereas they may feel somewhat cramped with the top on.

But it can be opened and stowed away in the boot in less than a minute. It took a little longer to raise again, but that may have been because we weren't used to the design.

Even women wearing short skirts won't find getting into the Z 1 a serious problem. They can sit on the threshold and swing their legs into the cockpit.

Pull the door handle and the recessed door will rise into position, followed automatically by the window. The windows can be raised or lowered electrically en route.

The doors have a central lock system. The wide-angled windscreen fits into a sturdy over-roll bar, while a lateral bar behind the dashboard reinforces the chassis.

All told, the BMW Z 1 is a superb car for people who enjoy "topless" motoring, appreciate comfort in a sports model and can afford the luxury (DM83,000 *is a fair amount of money*).

The way it handles when cornering and taking hairpin bends on steep gradients is really something.

Over 3,500 potential buyers have shown interest and BMW will be unable to run more than ten Z 1s a day off the assembly line in what used to be their pilot project unit. So there is a lengthy waiting list, which is less satisfactory.

Hans Joachim Sachsze

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 5 November 1988)

High claims by the maker . . . the Mercedes SL.

(Photo: Daimler-Benz)



Only 10 a day will be made . . . the BMW Z 1.

(Photo: BMW)

Sneak preview of the new Mercedes SL



Daimler-Benz have just released a photograph of the new-look Mercedes SL, a roadster officially not due to be unveiled until the Geneva motor show next spring.

It will incoporate new engines and a range of high tech. Daimler-Benz press spokesman Bernd Harling: "It incorporates everything that is currently feasible in automotive technology."

The new SL will include an electronic *shock absorber system as a standard feature.* It automatically adjusts to road conditions. Seat belts form an integral part of the seats.

The new two-by-two sports model will be available in a 300 SL version with the three-litre six-cylinder engine and in a 300 SL-24 version with a 225-hp four-cylinder engine.

The top model will be the 500 SL, with a new eight-cylinder engine, but there are plans to launch a 600 SL with a 400-hp, 12-cylinder, 48-valve engine in 1992.

Versions in the 300 to 500 SL range will cost between DM80,000 and DM120,000 in Germany. They should be available in time for next year's summer holidays.

(Hamburger Abendblatt, 17 November 1988)

■ THE ARTS

Attaining Esoteric Knowledge through the True Word



From an aesthetic point of view it is difficult to comprehend foreign culture and art and grasp the significance of art works and ritual objects.

This is exemplified magnificently by the "Shingon — The Art of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan" Exhibition in the East-Asian Museum in Cologne.

The strangeness of cult art works increases the more one tries to familiarise oneself with their contents and importance.

Buddhism came to Japan from India via China and Korea. First contacts were made in 525 AD, before the development of the Shingon School.

The Shingon sect (True Word) was founded by Kobo Daishi (774-835). Fundamentally it is a mystical, esoteric form of Buddhism. It teaches that the Buddha is at the heart of the universe and is latent in some way in all living beings.

Man is made aware of this through special rituals — chanting mystical syllables, ritual finger-entwining, magical spells, yoga concentration and the manipulation of symbolic utensiles

In Shingon art a development began between the 9th and 14th centuries whose significance to the uninitiated remains a mystery.

This exclusive quality of Buddhism in Japan is revealed in an accompanying photographic exhibition entitled "Rituals on the Holy Mount Koya-san." The Shingon sect established its headquarters deep in the mountains on Mount Koya near Kyoto and it became a repository of a great collection of art.

The main exhibition is made up of 90 cult figures, scrolls and ritual objects.

Visitors are deterred from coming to hasty conclusions, for the photographs, which Toshifumi Ike has selected, are based on his own experiences in meditation. If he had not for a long time lived in a monastery himself he would never have been given permission to display them.

The holy number in Esoteric Buddhism in Japan is five. Five, for instance, appears in the reliquary, whose form, from below upwards, symbolises Earth, Water, Fire, Wind or Air and the Ether or Space.

There are also five Buddhas of Esoteric Knowledge: the central figure of Dainichi-Nyorai, enthroned, larger than the four accompanying figures, in the centre of a system of coordinates, corresponding to the four points of the compass and their centre, which is of a particular importance.

Dainichi is enthroned and seated on a lotus flower. The lotus is a sign of purity.

The figure five again appears in the cult objects, the bells, in the instrument the priest uses to pass across the eyes, to open them for believers.

The arrangement of the five Buddhas of Esoteric Knowledge is symbolically in union with nature.

The shapes of the mandalas — mandalas are symbols of a cosmic order, symbols of the way of knowledge and redemption — stand for the world, for the cosmos and equally for the spiritual development of men.

The Buddha at the centre of the mandala is a cult figure and embodies the principle of Buddhist Teaching.

This can be seen in the altars built for the exhibition as well as in the meditation scrolls.

In the Shingon sect instead of god-like figures, instead of representations of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, who accompany him, support him, who help men to the Buddhist Teaching of unity with the cosmos, with the world and oneself, there are discs which represent embryonic syllables, indications of the gods in abbreviated form.

The Western visitor, to whom these teachings are foreign, should realise that the evil faces of the divinities are meant not for believers but for their enemies, who seek to deter the believer from his way.

It is obvious that a disciplined, religious esoteric teaching system produces a special form of art.

One can only get a rough idea of the meaning and significance of this if one tries to comprehend, modestly and as rationally as possible, the extreme complications of "Shingon."

Even the proportions have a deep significance and are in no way only stylistic features, even if they have to a considerable extent had influence in art beyond Japan.

The harmony of the proportions and representation, so perfect to Western eyes, comes from a foreign, very distant world, to which the outsider is denied access.

The influence on Western art reveals remarkable parallels. This influence on Western art began at the latest in the 19th century via the Jesuits' missionary work in the Far East, and even in the 18th century (Chinoiserie in Europe was not just the result of trade with Asia). The eye in the hand, a typically surrealist motive, is to be found again in this exhibition: admittedly not with only one or two hands with eyes, but in the form of the Bodhisattva Senjo-Kannon from a group of three with the King of Knowledge Fudo and the Watchman of the World Bishamon. Senjo-Kannon, "the Thousand-armed," has here 42 hands and in each hand a small eye. The visitor should not spring to hasty conclusions here — they are "the Thousand Eyes of Compassion" of a divinity, who will assist man to redemption.



One of the five Buddhas of Esoteric Knowledge. Painted wood, 91.2 cm high, Japan 12th C AD. (Photo: Catalogue)

There are five Buddhas of Esoteric Knowledge and five Kings of Esoteric Knowledge, whose anger is directed against everyone and everything, which stands in the way of man on his path to Enlightenment.

The King of Knowledge, Fudo, is seen as the central figure, who can be terrifying. He carries a sword and a lasso in his hands. The sword is a symbol of knowledge, the lasso, the "cord" for binding evil influences.

The Kings are helpers for the Buddhas of Esoteric Knowledge. The force and the spiritual discipline, which are hidden in the Shingon teaching, cannot be perceived as being in form and artistic quality of the very first rank by the uninitiated and nothing can be inferred of its aesthetics.

One does not attain Esoteric Knowledge without teaching, without practice and initiation.

The influence this teaching has had on culture and life in Asia and also Japan should not be underestimated.

The rigorous heirarchy of Shingon teaching extends far behind religion and art.

The excellent catalogue costs DM38, and there is a very helpful short guide for DM5.

Doris Schmidt

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 18 November 1988)

Cultural optimism as German centre opens in Peking



Foreign Affairs Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was present for the opening of the Goethe Institute in Peking, the first Western cultural Institute to be opened in China.

Goethe Institutes carry out a major part of the Bonn government's cultural activities abroad with the emphasis being on the teaching of German.

There are Goethe Institutes in Romania, Yugoslavia and Hungary, and negotiations are underway for establishing them in Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

The aim of the Institute in Peking is "promoting the German language in China."

The Chinese have requested that only the language as such should be taught, not "culture" if possible for culture could be political.

Just how the language can be separated from culture is a secret for Chinese sophists.

A part of the bureaucracy in Peking is suspicious of foreign influences, despite the policy of opening up China in operation for some years.

There has been no formal annulment of a decision of the Central Committee in the 1950s which banned the establishment of foreign cultural institutions in China.

Foreign Minister Genscher went into this in his speech. He said: "I hope that the Goethe Institute in Peking will soon be able to offer a cultural programme, which will serve the frank dialogue between our countries."

Chinese who are interested in German culture expect a lot from the Institute. After English German is the most important foreign language in the country, more important than Japanese or French.

It is uncertain just how many Chinese are learning German. There are 18,000 studying the language at state-run universities, where it is studied as a main or subsidiary subject.

The actual number is far more than this, however, for foreign language teaching has become a profitable business for many institutions in China. The head of the Goethe Institute, Herr Kahn-Ackermann, wants to improve the standard of German teaching in the coming year, working together with the Sino-German Society.

There are at present about 3,000 Chinese scientists and students studying in the Federal Republic, and 220 German scientists and students in China.

The expectations Chinese have of the Institute can only be disappointed by the China-centred attitudes of Chinese officials. There is considerable good will on the German side to fulfill these expectations.

Herr Kahn-Ackermann, 42, has worked and taught in China for a long time. He has translated Chinese writers such as Zhang Jie into German.

In his speech he compared the opening of the Goethe Institute with his Chinese wife giving birth to their child a few days before. His speech increased Chinese goodwill towards him, and it was well applauded when he ended.

There are six other Germans at the Institute to help Kahn-Ackermann. His deputy, and this is a new departure for Goethe Institutes, is Chinese. According to his contract he is there to support the head, not to interfer. He will certainly be helpful in dealing with the bureaucracy.

The Institute will be mainly involved

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■ FILMS

A little man to reward the good work

Felix, Europe's first film prize, presented at the Theater des Westens in Berlin, cannot be compared with Hollywood's Oscar in any way.

The prize was awarded for the first time this year for films made last year. Films from both Eastern and Western Europe qualify.

Felix is figure that gawps upwards with a hand protectively stretched out over a dove. He looks slightly helpless.

He did not glitter under the spotlights as does the polished, streamlined Oscar. But Felix stands for art; the Oscar is commercial.

Markus Lüpertz created the statue for the European Film Prize which has the ambitious title: "The Genius of Youth Protects Freedom."

The prize was called "Felix" because the idea was hammered out between European film-makers and the Berlin Senator for the Arts, Volker Hassemer (CDU), in a restaurant in Cannes called "Chez Felix."

At first Felix was cast in bronze, weighing a hefty 12 pounds. The organisers then feared that prize-winners would collapse on stage because of the weight.

Felix had to be hollowed out; but the statue was still too heavy. It brought the 87-year-old actor Curt Bois to his knees when he tried to pick it up.

The arrival of guests at the Theater des Westens, the colourful crowd in the theatre's foyer and the TV cameras panning about to zoom in on film greats was not to be compared with the marvellously stage-managed performance, tested over many years, put on in front of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles.

At the annual Academy Awards, that's the official title, a compère announces the arrival of the stars over a loud-speaker. The crowd cheers and whistles and the TV reporters try for interviews, so as to get close-ups of the stars for viewers watching in their homes.

The Oscar awards, the TV show with the largest audience by far, is a major PR exercise for the American film industry.

Via the Oscar award ceremony the industry reaches not only millions of American TV viewers but a big-spending, multi-language audience worldwide.

Then the show itself with all its minor hiccups in the Theater des Westens, too small by far.

A Swedish film reviewer complained that the film exerpts were poorly selected. The awards were not always made in front of the TV cameras, but when TV viewers were being shown the film excerpt.

Frequently presenter and prize-winner did not know which side they should leave the stage.

There were also a lot of catagories missing among the first European film prizes that are very much a part of the art of the film; documentaries, cutting, costume designer, make-up and so on.

The show, transmitted live to many European countries, was clumsily presented. There was also none of the excitement of the Oscar awards from which so much had been taken over, such as the procedure for handing over the prizes, the presentation of the awards by different stars, who announced: "The winner is..."

There was a lack of many things but not enthusiasm among the film industry audience in the Theater des Westens. The excitement in the auditorium reflected the obvious delight that the Oscar had at last got a little brother.

In Berlin it was not so much a matter of who had won he prizes, but that for the first time European film prizes were being awarded.

The idea of a European film prize emerged for the first time at the end of the 1920s, soon after the first Oscar was awarded, but it got nowhere.

When Berlin decided to under-write a European Film Prize, which included a cheque for DM100,000, at the end of the city's programme as European Culture City and within the framework of the European Film and TV Year, critics complained that Berlin was craving for status, particularly as the event would cost DM5.5 million.

Six months ago the financing was still uncertain. The Berlin Senate and the Second TV Channel were committed to sharing costs, but still the national Lotto Foundation had to jump in and help with two million marks.

There were also doubts as to whether "Europe's stars" would glitter in Berlin — whether enough top people in the European film industry would turn up for the gala evening.

The organisers were relieved that so many famous stars did really appear. Even Ingmar Bergman, the grand seigneur among European directors, did not personally pick up his Oscar in Hollywood for his film *Fanny and Alexander*, but he came to Berlin.

The media, also important for the success of the Prize, turned up in force; more than 300 journalists said they would be there. The event attracted attention even in Hollywood.

European directors played a special role in the awards. A dozen or so of the famous, including Ingmar Bergman, Sir Richard Attenborough, Bernardo Bertolucci, Istvan Szabo, Wim Wenders and others, signed an appeal for the cultural independence of the European film.

Much had to be improvised before the first awards were made. In all 48 feature films from 27 countries in the East and the West were nominated. The international jury of seven, under the chairman-

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Polish and Spanish entries get the first Felixes

Films from Poland and Spain were the first winners of the European Film Prize, Felix.

The two main awards each included a cheque for DM100,000. The ceremony was in Berlin.

The best film award went to the Polish short-film *Thou Shalt Not Kill* by Krzysztof Kieslowski, and the award for the best film made by a young director went to Spain's Pedro Almodovar for his *Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios*.

Other prizes went to Wim Wenders (West Germany), Louis Malle (France) and Bernardo Bertolucci (Italy).

The three-hour presentation in Berlin's Theater des Westens was televised live to 18 European countries in both East and West to about 300 million viewers.

The guest list for the gala evening read like a who's who of cinema in Europe: Ingmar Bergman, Bernardo Bertolucci, Macello Mastroianni, Giulietta Masina, Gina Lollobrigida, Joan Collins, Mario Adorf, Sergio Leone, Wim Wenders and Istvan Szabo.

The jury, chaired by French actress Isabelle Huppert, took a week to look at 48 nationally-nominated films from 27 European countries to select the best film and the best individual performance.

Considerable attention was given to the fact that all the East Bloc states, including East Germany, took part in the award, presented in West Berlin.

As a counterpart to the American film industry's Oscar, European prize-winners were handed a Felix, a bronze statue created by art professor Markus Lüpertz.

The statue shows a young male holding out his hand protectively over a dove.

Kieslowski's *Thou Shalt Not Kill* is a shattering, meticulous report on the murder of a taxi-driver and the execution of a young man.

Wim Wenders was awarded the prize for best direction for his film *Wings of Desire*. Louis Malle was given the award for the best script for his film *Au Revoir les Enfants*.

Felix stands for art, not commerce. (Photo: Ludwig Binder-Thiele)

The best-actor award went to Max von Sydow for his performance in the Danish film *Pelle the Conqueror*, and best actress was Spain's Carmen Maura for her performance in *Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios*.

Best supporting actor was the 87-year-old Curt Bois for his performance in *Wings of Desire*. The best supporting actress award went to Johanna ter Steege from Holland for her role in *Spoorloos*.

The prize for the best young actor went to Denmark's Pelle Hvenegaard for his performance in *Pelle the Conqueror*.

The prize for best set designs went to G. Aleksi-Meshishvili, N. Sandukeli and S. Gogolashvili for the Russian film *Ashik-Kerib*.

Outside the European prize competition awards were made to Britain's Sir Richard Attenborough for his outstanding contributions to the art of the film, to Italy's Bernardo Bertolucci and to Juri Chanin for the score for the Russian film *Die Tage der Dunkelheit* by Alexander Sokurov.

There was a standing ovation for the special awards made to Swedish director Ingmar Bergman and Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni. Mastroianni was hugged and kissed by actress Giulietta Masina, a friend for many years.

Bergman, supported by a walking stick when he went on the stage, was effusively greeted by Natasha Kinski as "the father of all directors."

Obviously moved Bergman said: "Hopefully we will not neglect films for all these splendid electronic devices. Hopefully we will not forget these 24 frames per second. Hopefully we shall never deny the magic of our dreams. Long live the cinematographic art!"

Hungarian director Istvan Szabo read out a joint appeal drawn up by many European directors, including Bergman, Wim Wenders, Bertolucci, Erich Rohmer, Federico Fellini and Claude Chabrol, for the recovery of European film culture.

dpa

(Bremer Nachrichten, 28 November 1988)

Goethe Institute in Peking

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in promoting the German language in China. It will not compete with Chinese universities teaching German.

The intensive course, 24 hours per week, will be divided up into four or five classes, each with 15 students.

The Institute will also offer evening classes for Chinese family members of German speaking foreigners in China, and for Chinese who are working in German firms.

Kahn-Ackermann is planning a literary seminar for 1989 with the writer Gerhard Köpf.

It is also proposed to organise a seminar for 1990 dealing with the problems of translating literature — not problems of a technical nature but the difficulties of taking into consideration another culture.

There are still difficulties that have to be ironed out. The Institute will be accommodated for the first three years at least in a building belonging to the premier foreign language institute in North-West China.

The renovation of the building covering 1,000 square metres, costing DM200,000, will only be completed in a few months time, and a direct telephone can only be installed in autumn.

The Bundestag has so far only approved the employment of one local employee. The term "local employee" covers workers such as secretary, interpreter, driver and cleaning lady.

Anyone who knows conditions in China knows that a single administrative employee is impossible for the smooth running of the Institute.

Due to the way bureaucrats think at present it will be difficult to negotiate for projects with Chinese direct without firstly having obtained permission from the state administration.

Apart from its specialised work the Goethe Institute will principally have to do its best to overcome official suspicion of such a foreign organisation. Other countries would also like to set up cultural institutions in China.

As is now possible by the Goethe Institute, these countries could also make a spiritual contribution, over-due for decades, to China from the West.

René Wagner

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 2 November 1988)

■ THE ENVIRONMENT

Genetically engineering bacteria to break down industrial toxins

STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

Hans-Joachim Knackmuss and his colleagues at Stuttgart University department of microbiology like going to places other people would not go near with a bargepole.

They like industrial wasteland with its polluted soil; garbage tips, especially tips full of toxic waste; and water purification plant at chemical works.

Their microscopic prey are bacteria that go by names such as pseudomonas and alcaligenes. They must be among the most frequent living creatures in the world. They live in soil or water.

Their natural task consists of decomposing natural substances. They biodegrade higher flora or fauna and bring full-circle the natural cycle on which all living beings rely by reducing them to hydrocarbons, water, nitrogen, sulphur and other substances.

If these micro-organisms did not exist the world's reserves of carbon dioxide, for instance, would be exhausted in 40 years.

For *many years man* has made use of these little helpers to decompose both natural and manmade substances in water purification plant.

Hans-Joachim Knackmuss has an even more ambitious target. He aims to breed micro-organisms tailor-made to break up toxic substances in which natural bacteria have yet to show the *least interest.*

Dioxins are one such group of toxic substances he hopes to handle with the aid of custom-built bacteria. The 52-year-old Stuttgart scientist has adopted a dual approach to developing his microbiological detoxifiers.

He first uses nature's own powers of imagination, as it were, then designs micro-organisms on the drawing-board in his laboratory.

He made headline news in *Science,* the US journal, last year with bacteria *he and a Swiss scientist had designed* to degrade tw substances simultaneously.

Bacteria had previously been able to decompose both substances separately, but when they occurred together "the micro-organisms called it a day," Knackmuss says.

The story was even more dramatic. The two substances occurred together in the purification plant of a chemicals factory and poisoned the sludge bacteria, killing off the entire biological pu*rification stage.*

It took over four years of basic research to find out why the bacteria were unable to deal with the two substances in combination yet could handle them separately.

"The two substances are very similar," he explains, "and the bacteria set about degrading them in what, respectively, was the wrong way. The byproducts were fatal for the bacteria."

He, his team and his fellow-scientist in Geneva succeeded with what he *calls a "heave-ho" and "a fair amount* of good luck" in isolating five genes from three different strains of bacteria.

These genes, which incorporate the blueprint for the substances the bacteria use to digest their diet, were transferred to a Pseudomonas soil bacterium.

This feat of genetic engineering resulted in a strain of bacteria capable of degrading both toxins simultaneously.

Yet the custom-built Stuttgart bacteria are not yet in use in sewage puri*fication.*

For one, Herr Knackmuss says, the laboratory-bred bacteria are not yet ready for practical use. They must first learn how to pass on their genetic know-how on how to degrade the twin toxins to their fellow-bacteria at the purification plant. Only then would the information be available to the entire colony of bacteria.

What is more, this result of genetic engineering must first be vetted and approved by the authorities, in this *case the Central Commission on Biological Safety.*

The crucial problem on which the commission must arrive at a decision is how safe laboratory-bred bacteria are and what damage they might cause if let loose. Herr Knackmuss is unable to offer a straightforward answer to either question.

"When we create new combinations of properties," he admits, "side-effects may occur that have not previously arisen."

The micro-organisms might, for instance, degrade the toxins to a limited extent, leaving intermediate products that are toxic either for them or for other living organisms.

He thus counsels a step-by-step approach, arguably starting with laboratory trials of the genetically-engineered strain, followed by laboratory trials of a complex model eco-system.

The custom-built bacteria could *then be put through their paces yet* again in a complete soil eco-system in a greenhouse or at an experimental purification plant.

Not until living organisms are shown not to suffer damage of any kind can there be any question of submitting the strain to the commission for approval, he says.

Even though he is well aware, as a microbiologist, of the risks that may be run he makes a most pertinent point.

"If we were to succeed in developing a bacterium that decomposes dioxins I should have to ask the lawmakers whether they preferred to live with dioxins or were prepared to permit the use of the micro-organism."

For him the answer is straightforward: he sees no need to hesitate. He and his colleagues are looking into other ways of at least partly degrading lethal dioxins.

They have noticed that micro-organisms can "nibble" at substances *that would otherwise appear not to be* biodegradable. Bacteria in this line of business are jointly bred in the laboratory. "Over night a strain may emerge that combines several partial activities," Herr Knackmuss says.



Has anyone seen alcaligenes? . . . Hans-Joachim Knackmuss. (Photo: Röhm)

This is because micro-organisms can exchange genetic information even from species to species as long as they live in a single cell culture.

This natural combination facility is much more promising than genetic engineering, he says. In between 70 and *80 per cent of cases it is faster.*

Ought not "natural" combinations to be vetted by the commission too? Hans-Joachim Knackmuss replies, with a shrug:

"If they want to prohibit that they will have to ban the natural evolution of life."

Rolf Andreas Zell

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 17 November 1988)

Dr Freund of Sandhausen and the laboratory bomb party

Nine years ago an explosion shook Sandhausen, a Rhine valley village near Heidelberg. A laboratory run by an ageing chemist, Dr Freund, was des*troyed and his one employee was killed.*

Four years later (Dr Freund has since died of natural causes) some alarming consequences have come to light.

Chlorohydrocarbons had contaminated the soil and poisoned the ground water. Sandhausen, which now owned the property, drilled emergency wells, installed filters and tried out other techniques to improve the water — but not to much effect.

Unexpected help now seems to be on its way from another laboratory in the "technology park" adjoining the new Heidelberg University campus.

International Biotechnology Laboratories GmbH set up in business here, in *bright new quarters, only three years* ago. Its young staff work in microbiology, biosynthesis and genetic engineering.

Small and ambitious firms of this kind are dismissed by some as bio-boutiques, but IBL research scientists have identified Pseudomonad bacteria (they aren't saying exactly which strain) that can make chlorohydrocarbons harmless.

The bacteria digest the carbon and degrade the toxic compound into less harmful components.

For months the IBL bacteria have been eating their way through the soil on the Sandhausen site, which is still highly contaminated. They have already



reduced the chlorohydrocarbon count from 2,500 to 500 micrograms per kilogram of soil.

In three to four years of bacterial digestion, the IBL research scientists say, at a cautious estimate, the site should be largely decontaminated.

IBL's business *manager, Dr Karl* Massholder, says the idea first occurred to his company one evening over a glass of wine with a local businessman.

"We failed to see why the chlorohydrocarbon problem should defy solution, and as nature has not yet had an opportunity of dealing with these new toxins, we gave it a helping hand, as it were."

Neither he nor his partner, research director Dr Peter Souw, are prepared to reveal just how they have achieved the seemingly impossible. They are deliberately *vague in describing how their de*contamination technique works.

"If suitable micro-organisms are available where the damage has occurred that are capable of eliminating the toxin if the ground water is suited to their nutritional needs, nutrient is infiltrated in the direction of flow of the ground water toward the contaminated area."

In other words, if the bacteria that are naturally present include strains capable of degrading the toxin they are fed a special diet to make them increase and multiply.

If scientists are unable to identify suitable bacteria in situ they resort to microbes that have grown accustomed to the unusual surroundings in other accidents and are capable of digesting the harmful substances.

Together with a specially devised nutrient cocktail the mighty microbes are *then let loose on the toxins.*

Regardless of the profits they are earning the two IBL bosses and their staff of 33 still have both feet firmly on the ground.

"At present," they say, "we can handle only 10 accidents a year, as against several thousand that are estimated to occur annually in the Federal Republic of Germany alone.

"Besides, we have yet to tackle an abundance of other toxins that may one day, after lengthy R&D work, prove equally amenable to biodegradation."

As orders for their chlorohydrocarbon-eating bacteria roll in, the IBL scientists are worried people might feel their pseudomonads were sneaking genetic engineering into ground and drinking water treatment.

"That is absolutely untrue," Dr Massholder says, almost wringing his hands in emphasis. "If it were, we could blow our brains out here and now."

Yet even if he and his colleagues use natural bacteria, and not a biotech laboratory product, to digest the toxin the problem remains.

How dangerous is it to use uniform micro-organisms on a large scale?

Heinz Günther

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 20 November 1988)

■ MEDICINE

Prevention is better than cure: combating addiction to drugs that are legal

Society is finding it difficult to cope with the problem of illegal drugs; it is not having any more success with legal drugs such as alcohol and prescribed drugs and medicines.

Per capita consumption is steadily increasing. More and more people are becoming addicted to the bottle or to pill-popping.

As a result, there is a growing readi*ness to help legal addicts.* This was shown by the amount of interest in a congress on Alcohol and Drugs at Work at the International Congress Centre in West Berlin.

Over 1,500 doctors, lawyers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, educationalists and union and management representatives attended the congress.

It was held by the *DHS*, an organisation concerned with addiction of all kinds. Its members include welfare associations and specialised addiction agencies.

Yet the outlook for addicts is anything but rosy, as speakers, platform debates and seminar discussions made it clear.

The working world has only been aware for a dozen or so years that alcoholics and drug addicts need help, both at work and from outside sources.

Roughly 800 private companies, mainly large firms, and public sector employers in the Federal Republic of Germany have launched programmes to help addicts.

Some of these programmes are doing good work, but they reach at best only one employed person in five. The rest face the prospect of dismissal and social decline.

What is more, the likelihood of being supported by the Red Cross or church welfare services is growing poorer.

Grants for stays in clinics and other welfare measures are progressively being axed. No extra social workers are being taken on to look after addicts full-time. Yet the number of addicts and people in need of help continues to increase.

The statistics are a veritable indictment. As quoted by Ulf Fink, Berlin's Senator of Health and Welfare, they cry out for action by the authorities.

On average five per cent of employed persons are alcoholics in need of medical treatment, while a further 10 per cent are on the brink of joining the ranks of fully-fledged alcoholics.

At least DM1.5bn a year is currently budgeted by German hospitals for treating alcoholics.

In 1986 nearly 80 per cent of 25,000 courses of hospital treatment costing DM500m were for alcoholics and a further seven per cent for multiple addicts.

Absenteeism due to alcohol costs at least DM3bn a year.

Fritz-Jürgen Kador of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations soberly said that alcoholics were worth only 75 per cent of their wages or salaries in terms of output. In comparison with other members of staff alcoholics were absent 16 times more often, sick two and a half times more often, involved in accidents at work three and a half times more often and off work as a result for one and a half times longer.

On the other hand DM32bn a year was spent on beer, wine and spirits, DM26bn on cigarettes and tobacco and DM16bn on medicine, Herr Fink told the congress.

Ernst Knischewski of the Protestant Church welfare service, the *Diakonisches Werk,* said he failed to understand why the state, which grossed over DM20bn a year in taxes and duties on alcohol, tobacco and medicine, spent a mere DM2bn on treating addiction.

Society — and the working world — *could certainly afford to hire the staff* needed to help people suffering from alcohol and drug addiction, said Karl-Heinz Janzen, assistant general secretary of IG Metall, the engineering workers' union.

He felt virtually all firms ought to hire a full-time member of staff to look after addicts. For companies with a payroll of over 500 the extra salary could be recouped from addiction-related costs cut as a result of the work put in by a qualified member of staff.

Smaller firms could share the services of a specialist in this sector.

Herr Janzen felt a "reorientation in combating addictive complaints" was indispensable in view of the spiralling cost of the health service.

The addict must be enabled to stay in his accustomed surroundings. If they were an environment that encouraged addiction, they must be better included in the course of treatment.

The aim and effect must surely be to prevent higher costs from weighing yet *more* heavily on health insurance and pension schemes.

A "welfare triad" might well prove the answer: advice at work, outpatient treatment and the facilities offered by self-help groups.

Difficulties in treating addiction at work are, however, evidently not just a matter of marks and pfennigs. Society has double standards *where alcohol is* concerned, the conference was told.

Being a good drinker and able to hold your drink is a social virtue. To fail in the sense of growing addicted to alcohol or falling ill can easily led to an addict being ostracised both at work and in private life.

Union representatives at the congress were scathing in their repeated reports of boozing in the boardroom and of alcoholics among the management.

They were hardly in a position to rule *out the man on the shopfloor slaking his* thirst with a beer or two.

"They drink like fish in the executive suite," staff representatives agreed, "yet are only too ready to put the boot in to the small fry who drink one over the eight."

And even where both sides are clearly aware of the problem, theory and practice can still be poles apart.

IG Metall's Rita Russland, who works on addiction and addiction problems for the union, had a tale to tell about centres *where the trade unions held residential* courses.

The sale of alcohol was limited at these centres, strict arrangements having been agreed. Yet even works councillors keen enough on their union work to attend *courses had been known to be hopping* mad on being told that schnapps was not sold in the canteen.

Herr Janzen recalled that the trade unions had tried to negotiate a total ban on alcohol at work in about 1904. But they failed because the workers would hear nothing of the idea.

They argued that as long as conditions at work were beneath human dignity they must be allowed to make them more bearable by taking drink.

This argument may no longer hold water, yet alcohol and patent medicines are still taken to ease the burden of both overwork and boring routine, as Herr Fink put it.

Medical specialists wondered whether the growing resort to narcotics and medicine as an escape valve might not be attributable to people being less prepared to tolerate the ups and downs and aches and pains of everyday life.

Psychologists and welfare workers argued that the use of alcohol, a legalised drug, had been part and parcel of German society for centuries.

If there had been any change, it was merely that standards by which the use of alcohol was judged had steadily declined *and been abandoned in recent decades.*

Addicts at work in either the public or the private sector stand to derive little benefit from such deliberations, so the congress considered a change in strategy.

It did so because both management and workmates showed scant sense of solidarity with alcohol and drug addicts.

In terms of welfare legislation they may be deemed sick, but in practice they are seldom treated as sick, and there is little likelihood of a change of mind or heart on this subject in the foreseeable future.

Deterrent strategy has long been ineffective. Little or nothing is to be gained by telling people what dreadful conse*quences alcohol abuse can have at work,* at home and on their health.

The alternative is to promote prevention programmes and schemes to encou*rage addicts and potential addicts to lead* more positive lives.

More and more companies running addiction assistance programmes have switched to stressing, as part of a general encouragement of health consciousness, to impressing on staff that personal happiness, job fulfilment and joie de vivre can be achieved without cigarettes, alcohol and medicinal drugs.

Managements will need to do much more, said DHS business manager Herbert Ziegler, to make work more fun *where routine and complaints of one* kind and another prevail at work.

Yet the new preventive approach is more promising than its predecessors, all *of which started treating the problem too* late.

No-one can judge how anyone will respond in the long term to social drinking. Will they be occasional drinkers or become habitual drinkers? There is no way of telling.

On average, a congress press conference was told, it was 10 to 15 years before dependence was recognised to be addiction and the addict was prepared to accept help.

That is far too long, especially as fami*ly life has suffered in the meantime, work* performance has declined and the addict's social standing has suffered irreparable damage.

So it is better to try any approach to combat the problem before it is too late.

Dieter Dietrich

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 25 November 1988)

FRONTIERS

From bricklayer to fakir in a series of scorching lessons

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

His cycle has only one wheel and no handlebars. But he sits on it as if it couldn't be more comfortable. With his *right hand, he pushes another* one-wheeled cycle ahead of him. With the other hand he holds a seven-step aluminium ladder in the air.

A khaki rucksack sagging with Boccia bowls (used in street bowls) hangs from his back and bumps along the ground. A worn-out board projects from the top of the sack. So does the grip end of an Indian club and a Chinese fire torch; around the sack are a few hoola hoops.

Rolf Bendig is on his way to work -- in wide, black breeches that flutter as he goes. His head is completely bald apart from a little piece of hair at the back of his head. A silver half moon dangles from one ear-lobe; from the other shines a plain stud.

Bendig, who comes from Cologne, has chosen a career that puts no value on dress regulations, that has no boss and only a few fellow practitioners: he is a fakir. (Fakir: itinerant Hindu ascetic or wonder-worker).

His profesional name is Fakir Alyn; and he describes himself as an "entertain*ment artist specialising in fire*" who "uses sharp items and blunts them with comedy."

At company parties and street festivals, he walks over broken glass with bare feet without drawing the slightest drop of blood, puts a blazing torch in his mouth as if it were instead a cone of ice cream, and survives with skin intact when he lies with bared back on a bed of nails he made himself.

He juggles with the torch, frying pan and raw egg; blows up a rubber glove through his nose until it is the size of a pumpkin; and, as he puffs away, plays hoolahoop with a ring of fire while a firework glows on top of his bald head.

For almost 10 years, Alyn has been one of what he estimates are a band of only about 20 or 30 fakirs in West Germany who risk their necks by doing things that have been performed by religious ascetics in Asia for centuries.

The work "fakir" means "poor person" in Arabic. Once upon a time, ascetics wandered as religious mendicants *through the Islamic countries, using their* tough skin to demonstrate self discipline in the interests of both God and Mammon.

The British, who in their conquering ways, came across them more often than other Europeans, popularised the fakir in Europe, although it became the artistic side which was looked at with wonder rather than the religious.

Bendig, 40, had not the slightest intention of doing anything in this line until one day he went to Cologne's Volksgarten and saw a fakir playing with fire. He recalls now how, at the time, he was trying to find his niche somewhere.

He had already tried his hand at many things. He might have become one of any number of things, a singer, perhaps, or a dancer. He was then a bricklayer, 30 years old, 85 kilos (13 stone 5 pounds) and still had hair on his head. He had just decided to completely change his lifestyle.

He himself is at a loss today to explain how he departed from the world of normal life. When he was 20 he already knew that he would want to do something other than lay bricks for ever. It was simply a feeling.

Over the next 10 years, he forgot about it. But when he turned 30, the idea returned "without any apparent reason". He said goodbye to bricklaying and hasn't picked up a trowel since.

At first he lived from his savings; then he did a bit of singing, made "trashy bits and pieces" -- although this reminded him too much of his old trade -- and then started to develop an interest in street theatre.

He lost weight, became more supple, changed his diet and adopted a healthier lifestyle. He continued looking for a job which would bring him money and enjoyment.

Why did he decide to become a fakir? Simply because he happened to see one, he explains. His first attempt to walk over broken glass took place in his home -- and it wasn't at all promising: "I just broke a few glasses and walked over them. I thought anybody could do it." The 25 cuts in his feet showed him otherwise.

He says: "It is all right beforehand to know that you're going to go over the glass, but it's no good thinking as you go: 'I'm walking over broken glass and I'm not allowed to injure myself.' Otherwise, you won't manage it." A fakir must be hard with himself, even if he burns his nose.

He knows from experience. The first time he put, full of trepidation, the fiery torch in his mouth, he burnt himself and for a week was able to eat only cold food.

He has burnt holes in his tongue and occasionally the ring of fire has scorched his trousers and testicles.

"But that was no reason to give up," he says. "If you are determined to leap across a stream with both feet, you will do it."

But will-power alone is also not enough to give protection against burns. He *gives most of the credit to breathing and* relaxation techniques which "can remove much of the pain threshold."

For his first fire attempt, he simply wrapped some gauze round a torch, dipped it in a flammable solution, lit it, held his arm over the flame and discovered: "Bloody hot."

He still regularly burns the hair on his arms, but otherwise the heat doesn't bother him. The only real danger is if a gust of wind comes from an unexpected direction. He uses yoga exercises to loosen his whole body so that it notices neither flames nor nails. He describes the combination of yoga and meditation as a form of self hypnosis. Before every performance, he stands on his head, *yoga style*, to eliminate stage fright and amuse his audience. Another trick to prevent pain and to win energy is to stay away from drugs of any sort. Not even coffee. At home, only herbal tea and malt ersatz coffee from barley malt are served.


Fakir Alyn . . . It doesn't pay to think about it.
(Photo: Klein)

In the kitchen there is a grain mill. Next to it is flour made from soya bean -- he doesn't eat any animal protein. And fire-tasting Alyn hasn't smoked for 25 years.

He learned the trade fast. After a few weeks he was able to negotiate a path of broken glass without too much damage. Half a year later, he was able to take his act on the road.

For three years he performed with a blazing torch and a bed of nails he assembled himself. He went to the big cities of Europe and, in the pedestrianised shopping zones, operated his own one-man street theatre.

He laid himself on the bed of *nails and* walked over broken glass, he spat fire and swallowed flames and wriggled out of iron chains. He pepped up the traditional fakir repertoire by encouraging audience participation and introducing touches of humour. The humour, however, was not well received by fellow fakirs, who regard it as inappropriate for *the trade*.

The street performances were profitable, but they were only a stepping stone (or should that be stepping glass?) to other things. The stage.

His first stage appearance was four years ago as a fire swallower in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* in Cologne's opera house. He still appears at city festivals, theatre festivals and at private gatherings, and manages "to make a good living." His programme has broadened enormously over the past few years because, he says, long term the fakir repertoire is too limited to remain interesting. So he does things that the ascetics would never dream of doing such as juggling with Indian clubs and doing his act on the one-wheeled cycle.

He says the more traditional of the acts are not as popular as they once were. Sometimes he asks his audience if he should do the bed-of-nails trick and it says "no." Alyn thinks that they see so much aggression on television and video that they would rather see something less serious. But his fire acts, they are still popular.

The most important thing for him is to be able to put his craft over and be funny at the same time.

He trains several hours a day, which *means even going shopping and taking* his dog out while riding his one- wheeled cycle. He keeps himself fit with hard physical exercise.

He says he knows he as at the age where people are prone to heart attacks, so he pushes himself to the limit. But otherwise, he feels his age is no handicap.

Rolf Bendig, alias Fakir Alyn, is still restless: "I'm still looking." It could *well* be that he will find something totally different to do.

Only one thing is certain: "I want to be able to make an terrific living at it so I'll have a good income in old age." So he really does count himself as mere mortal, after all.

Petra Pluwatsch

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 26 November 1988)

Continued from page 11

ship of French actress Isabelle Huppert, selected the prize-winners.

As British actor Ben Kingsley said, it was not much of a pleasure sitting for 12 to 14 hours a day watching films for a whole week long.

Then the jury members had their own ideas in the choice of prize-winners. Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis nominated film music which was not include in the jury's list.

Then jury members awarded an additional prize to Sir Richard Attenborough, apart from the prizes planned for Bernardo Bertolucci, Marcello Mastroianni and Ingmar Bergman. Shrugging his shoulder a member of Berlin's Senate said: "They are real artists."

The prize awards were welcomed equally in the East and the West. Every East Bloc country producing films took part.

Horst Pehnert, East Berlin's Deputy Minister for the Arts, who had welcomed the Prize in an interview he had given before the event, came with his colleagues.

The success of the awards ceremony was made possible to a considerable extent because it was a totally European event, an acknowledgement of the joint traditions of the European film.

"Politicians must provide the location and hope that people use it to the full," said Volker Hessemer, Berlin's *Senator* for the Arts in an interview he had given before the prize-giving.

Despite the considerable costs the Berlin Senate hopes that the prize award ceremony will remain in Berlin. It is not yet certain whether the venue will change from "European Culture City" to "European Culture City," or remain in one place. It is also still not certain whether the prize will become an established institution, which is what many film industry people would like.

The prize, according to the appeal made by European directors, "has not been created against anything but for something," for strengthening the European film industry in the East and the West in equal measure.

Even if the Felix is not to be an "Anti-Oscar," the award was a "dialogue with the Oscar," as Harry Gilmore put it, the American representative to Berlin.

Marianne Heuwagen

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 28 November 1988)

HORIZONS

Planned law aimed at helping unmarried fathers gain access to children

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

Klaus Kersting has not been allowed to see his daughter for two years. He lived with the girl's mother for three years before they broke up.

For a year, he saw his daughter every Sunday for a few hours. Then the mother stopped him. She got a court order back her up.

Her reasons for the change of mind seem reasonable: the daughter became upset on seeing the father and afterwards needed comforting.

The judge didn't look into the question of why the girl became upset. Nor did any psychologist. Nor any social worker.

Did the daughter become upset because she was unable to reconcile the man himself with the ugly picture that mother drew of him? Or was it perhaps because she had to say goodbye each time?

None of this mattered — because the mother knew the law stood four-square behind her. An unmarried father separated from the mother is in a legally hopeless position if the mother wants to keep him away.

But new laws are being drafted to give the unmarried father improved rights — with rights of access the main point. Conservatives and feminists object.

The draft legislation proposes that fathers of illegitimate children should be allowed to cultivate contacts with their children if this does not harm the child's welfare.

In contrast, the existing law has a different nuance: it says that contact with the father must advance the interests of the child.

Justice Minister Hans Engelhard's plans do not go far enough in the view of *the men involved. They demand that* they should have the same rights of custody as fathers of legitimate children after a divorce.

A Cologne educationalist said: "Probably we would be better off not demanding so much. Perhaps it would be better to announce that we would be content with just the right to visit our children."

He has not been able to visit his son for the past three years. He is putting all his hopes on the new law and the attitude taken by the judge in the guardianship court.

After separating from his companion of many years standing Peter Sander (his name has also been altered) once had the right to visit his son — twice a month for three hours — but this was taken away from him when the mother said that the visits were not good for the boy's wellbeing.

According to Peter Sander he and his son got on well together until the day his former companion discovered that he was living with another woman.

Sander is a *teacher. He did not wish to* have his true identity revealed in case it provoked his former companion and the mother of his son, when he made a second approach for visiting rights.

He is convinced that his rights were discontinued not on the grounds of his son's welfare but simply because his former companion found out about his new relationship.

He maintained: "I have been punished because of the new woman in my life." He said he felt that he had been cheated out of his rights as a father.

What he wants is in fact quite modest: he would like to see his son twice a month. He said it would be expecting too much to hope to be with him for a weekend.

He added that he just wanted to see how his son was getting on. He knows more about his pupils than his own child, whose mother is duty-bound to inform him about how the boy is growing up and getting on.

Fathers who have to pay maintenance regard comments about the child's welfare and the mother's rights as derisive. One father of two children said: "I do not want just to have to pay for ever."

Since he separated from his companion, who was the mother of his son and daughter, he has only been able to follow their development from photographs.

For the past four years he has received a colour photo with the names of the children and the date on the reverse side once a year.

He has never received a letter of thanks or even a telephone call for the presents he has sent his children at Christmas and for their birthdays. Sometimes he has the suspicion that the children never get the parcels he sends to them.

Sometimes he wonders if it would not be better if he refrained from showing his children his affection for them, but then he imagines that one day both children could be standing at his door to visit him.

The new law, with which fathers of illegitimate children have to come to terms, affects worst those fathers, of all people, who are a far cry from the image of the authoritarian patriarch.

An official from the Bundestag administration in Bonn said: "I took a year *off from work to look after our baby* daughter, so that her mother could do her exams." He misses the close contacts he had with his child. For the past year he has been forbidden all contact with her.

He declined to take up visiting rights which allowed him two hours three times a month with his daughter, when his former companion spoke of him before the guardianship court as "just a semen donor."

In September his daughter started school. A week later he waited for her in his car and saw her when she came out o *the school gate with her class friends.* He did not get out of the car, but he felt as if he were a sinner caught out when his daughter asked him if he was waiting for someone.

The stories which banned fathers tell do not fit in very well with what women have to say after a broken relationship.

The men have hurt pride, hurt vanity. They attempt to get involved even after the breakup, claim ownership over everything, play the strong-man and pretended to feelings they do not have; the list of complaints against the alleged bad fathers is endless.

The Church and feminists provide additional ammunition against the modest demands of fathers of families where no wedding ceremony has taken place.

One pastor asked a man why he had not married. The despairing man had for years played the role of father of the family and had brought up his two children "just like in an ordinary family."

The pastor could not understand his answer: "Neither of us wanted to marry."

Feminists insist on women's rights as if they were defending the last bastion in the battle of the sexes.

A woman recently placed an advertisement in a Berlin newspaper: "I want to get visiting rights withdrawn from the father of my children. Who knows any *tips or tricks to achieve this?*"

The question reflects what has driven fathers to the barricades after years of silence.

Marianne Quoirin

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 4 November 1988)

Custody rulings foiled by child abductions

One day in August, Karine Bagheri-Gamerschlag waited for her daughter, Sara, 8, and son, David, 5, to return home. They didn't come.

They had been to visit their Iranian father, Siamak Bagheri, and the mother feared that he had absconded to Iran with them. He had.

He had done it once before, in October 1987, to force her to withdraw a divorce application. So she stopped proceedings, the children were returned — and she opened proceedings again.

In December 1987 the court awarded her temporary custody of the children in the interim before the case became absolute but warned her of the risk that the father might again act.

He did. On 7 August he telephoned from Teheran and told her he and the children intended remaining in Iran.

The Iranians do not recognise German courts on custody questions. In Iran, the father is usually given custody. And if Frau Bagheri-Gamerschlag, 38, had gone to Iran to get her children back, she might not have been allowed to return to Germany.

The foreign wife of an Iranian automatically has Iranian citizenship and is, as a consequence, obliged to obey her husband's wishes. She would have needed her husband's approval for her to return to the Federal Republic.

In her distress she turned to West German politicians, to the President, Richard von Weizsäcker, Chancellor Kohl, Rita Süssmuth, now president of the Bundestag but previously Family Affairs Minister, Employment Minister Norbert Blüm and Foreign Affairs Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

All her letters ended up sooner or later in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, but the *Ministry has not been able to hold* out much hope for her that her children will be returned.

This case is far from an isolated one, Doris Bounaira of the Cologne-based "Child Protection International" claims that there are between 500 and 1,000 similar cases a year in the Federal Republic.

These cases do not always involve conflict in marriages between Germans and non-Germans; two-thirds of them involve a German man and wife where one of the partners, who does not have custody of the children, abducts them.

Frau Bonaira told her association that "since divorce law was reformed in 1976 well-off fathers believe they can dodge having to pay maintenance by running off with the children.

"In such cases no-one knows where to look for the children. If the father is a foreigner it is fairly certain that he will have returned to his own country," she said.

In most cases it is the father who takes the children away to live in an environment that is culturally foreign to them.

The motive can be revenge, for instance, because the wife has applied for divorce or to put the wife under pressure to withdraw the divorce proceedings she has started. Matters concerning maintenance can also play an important role.

Doris Bounaira said: "There is scarcely any hope of getting a child back who has been abducted to an Arab country."

She founded the non-profit-making *organisation "Child Protection International,"* and is the organisation's first president. Despite a shortage of funds it has been able to offer help in more than 100 cases, bringing children back home.

The main problem in these cases is that there is a lack of international agreement. There is, it is true, the 1980 Hague agreement on the aspects of civil law concerning international abductions of children, and a European Community agreement on the recognition and implementation of custody orders for children.

No Islamic country, however, has signed these agreements and, according to Doris Bounaira, these are just the countries which present the greatest problems.

Failing agreements "Child Protection International" relies on prevention. "We try," Doris Bounaira said, "to nip the situation in the bud. One has to take every sign of what the father is planning seriously."

In problem cases the association recommends allowing a third party to keep the situation under control or to withdraw visiting privileges completely.

In many cases Doris Bounaira uses a method that has been applied successfully in France; during or after a divorce the non-German partner in the marriage agrees to give up all rights of custody in a private contract.

This agreement must be witnessed in all its legal details by the person's embassy or a court in the country of the non-German member of the marriage.

In cases of emergency there are then good legal grounds, even in Iran, to sue for recognition of a custody order in the man's own country; this puts a stop to possible "abductions."

Advice of this sort has come too late for Karine Bagheri-Gamerschlag. Her divorce has come through and she was given custody of the children.

Siamak Bagheri has started divorce proceedings in Iran and put in his claim for custody of the children.

Little Sara is now attending a school *in Teheran: She wrote secretly to her* mother: "I cry a lot. Whatever happens you must come and bring us back."

Hanne Eckart

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 27 November 1988)